

Market report

Pat Rogers

ROBIN MYERS and MICHAEL HARRIS (Editors)

Sale and Distribution of Books from 1700
164pp. Oxford Polytechnic Press.
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The history of the book trade is a reflexive genre. Its findings are mediated to the public along channels available to students of a minority interest. So the useful new "Publishing Pathways" series owes its existence to the staff and students of a course for the Diploma in Publishing at Oxford Polytechnic. The titles which have emerged reflect credit on the sponsors, not least in the standards of presentation. For those who have no special hang-up concerning the reproduction of an unjustified typescript, *Sale and Distribution* has a pleasantly uncluttered look: a map, an original title-page, a graph and a manuscript letter are all legibly incorporated. Something has gone wrong with a note on an early page, and the abbreviation "cf" turns up as "of". But such accidents occur in the best regulated printing-houses.

Easy to see why there are few commercial outlets for a volume of this kind. The five essays, originally delivered at a conference in 1981, are termed by their authors "papers", and that's what they are. They take subjects replete with dense subject-matter: they go patiently through the sources, like court-room exhibits; they fly from trendy formulas and fashionable short-cuts. What they supply instead is a careful account of some well-defined theme; if they are usually stronger to narrative and documentation than in analysis, that may be bibliographically just what the age demands.

Contributions by the editors frame the collection. Michael Harris leads off with a strong item on galleys literature. His perspective is an unusual one: Old Bailey proceedings and Tyburn tales studied from the point of view of their dissemination and commercial fortunes. As with the other studies, we find a number of familiar names cropping up - John Applebee, of *Weekly Journal* fame; Edmund Curll; major eighteenth-century publishers such as Roberts and Cooper. But the information has never been brought together before. In this form, and Harris leaves the general picture much clearer. Social historians who accept the thesis of

Peter Linebaugh on the use of Tyburn pagentry in *interrogation* should study the mechanics of the operation.

Ian Maxted provides a detailed and one might say street-wise account of the impact of the printed word in Devon. The material relates more to Exeter than anywhere else, and again it centres on the eighteenth century, though the centuries preceding and following do receive some attention. Despite some odd paragraphing habits, Maxted offers a highly readable survey: this does not quite bear out W. G. Hoskins's pessimistic view that "somewhere between 1860 and now, Exeter ceased to be a cultured city", but it is a balanced appraisal of loss and gain deserving scrutiny. There is some especially valuable information on ephemera and popular literature. Two worthies scooped up from the limbo of time are the hawkers Dame Bedford ("a very sottish and profane person", who was swiftly made redundant) and Lobb of Sherborne. Can this latter have been related to the Bath bookseller Samuel Lobb, who may be connected by further surmise with the Leake family and Samuel Richardson?

Gwyn Walters discusses early sales catalogues: he stretches their undoubted importance as a bibliographic tool to its limits, and

asserts with more confidence than some could muster that Defoe research has been much impeded by neglect of the sale catalogue of his books. It is hard to be sure: the catalogue contains books owned by someone quite different, while the collection may well have been assembled chiefly in the later and relatively genteel phase of Defoe's life. Further, proof of ownership is never proof of close acquaintance. Still, this is another instructive piece, as is the concluding essay by Robin Myers on sales by auction. Here the leading figures are Christopher Cock in the Georgian era and George Robins in the early Victorian period. There is an amusing insight into the Strawberry Hill sale of 1842, which seems to have served as a bibliophile's Eglintoun Tournament. Cock had been satirized in drama by Fielding: we are told that "Hen appears among the male *dramatis personae*, but was played by Mrs Clarke." It wasn't quite so odd, at that, for the part was taken by Charlotte Charke, a notable performer in breeches on and off the stage. Lady Mary's husband Edward Wortley Montagu is also given a knighthood posthumously.

There remains the most genuinely innovative item, in which Giles Barber analyses the import and export

of books in the eighteenth century. His raw data come from what we look a fairly obvious location, which everyone has missed up till now: the Customs file in the Public Record Office. Barber is able to chart the broad patterns of activity with fair precision, and to relate the trade cycles to external events. One interesting fact which emerges is that the "Western" (transatlantic) export market was not much hit by the Seven Years War, though one might have supposed that some theatres of the conflict lay uncomfortably close to the routes of passage. It is an admirable piece of detailed inquiry, which leaves abundant scope for future research. All this goes to show that, little as the modern publishing industry may suspect the fact, earlier history's a good hands.

English Poetry 1660-1880 by Donald C. Mehl Jr (501pp. Corgi, 0 8103 1231 1) contains a general bibliography, covering reference, background resources and literary studies; and bibliographies of thirty-one individual authors, including Blake, Butler, Chatterton, Collins, Cowper, Crabbe, Dryden, G. Goldsmith, Gray, Johnson, Keats, Pope, Prior, Rochester, Shenstone, Smart, Swift, Thomson and Young.

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On the edge of the abyss

Pat Rogers

WILLIAM COWPER

The Letters and Prose Writings
Volume 1, 1750-81, 598pp. £27.50.
0 19 811863 5.
Volume 11, 1782-86, 652pp. £35.
0 19 812607 7.
Volume III, 1787-91, 630pp. £45.
0 19 812608 5.
Edited by James King and Charles Ryskamp
Oxford: Clarendon Press.

BILL HUTCHINGS

The Poetry of William Cowper
246pp. Croom Helm. £12.95.
0 7099 1249 8

One of the things that got the Romantic Movement moving was the dissolution of the preceding generations. Few major writers survived the middle age of sensibility: the new voices of the third quarter of the eighteenth century were hushed all too soon. Collins and Churchill, Smart and Chatterton, Sterne and Smollett - each went to his early grave. In the 1770s Hume, Gray, Goldsmith and Garrick followed them, outlived by the last representative of an older order, Samuel Johnson. Then in the 1790s a fearsome necrology: Reynolds, Robertson, Gilbert White, Gibbon, Boswell, Burke and Horace Walpole.

Not a single literary figure of importance in England who had been established by 1775 was left in the year of the *Lyrical Ballads*. William Cowper is not truly an exception for he came to prominence with the Olney Hymns in 1779, and consolidated his reputation in the next decade. That he dragged on his existence in Norfolk until April 1800 appears a kind of freakish accident: even the Ossianic bard Macpherson had gone by 1796. In his terror of damnation, Cowper clung on with animal obstinacy to frail life, and refused to vacate the stage on cue.

"The consideration of my short continuance here," he wrote to John Newton in 1790, "which was once grateful to me, now fills me with regret. I would live and live always."

But there was nothing new in isolation for Cowper. Since his breakdown at the age of thirty-one, he had felt himself a spiritual outcast. This is a process charted in the narrative Cowper wrote to describe his own conversion and the example of holy dying provided by his brother: an account known as "Adelphi", which James King and Charles Ryskamp have edited afresh in the first volume of *The Letters*. The new text derives from Judith Madan, the poet's widow, and it brings out more of the suicidal and phantasmagoric in his imagination. Unsurprisingly, it is an idiom of spiritual autobiography at large: "the language of my mutinous and disobedient heart", "the place of my second nativity" (Huntingdon, where he had retreated after his spell in the Collegium Insanorum), "the sense of sin and the expectation of punishment".

When he moves to Olney in 1776, Cowper became increasingly influenced by John Newton. Much of the first two volumes of letters is dominated by the personality of Newton. After his departure for St Mary Woolnoth in 1780 ("the Vicarage became a Melancholy Object, as soon as Mr Newton had left it"), wrote Cowper glumly, the correspondence seems moulded as much by the absent one as the present to Olney. "How naturally does affliction make us Christians," the poet had once reflected, and the subsequent years were to confirm this identification of personal disaster with spiritual awakening. It is possible to reverse the order of those terms, so that one looks for private grief as a validation of the workings of the Almighty; and this, in effect, with his ironical Calvinism, Newton did.

These days it is unfashionable to deplore the effect of evangelicalism on Cowper's poetry. But when Cowper tells Lady Hesketh on the resumption of their intimacy in 1785, "My dear Cousin, Dejection of Spirits, which I suppose may have prevailed many a time from becoming an Author, made me only," he provides evidence to support the charge as much as to

oppose it. There is a narrowness of focus in the letters to Newton which helped to hasten Cowper's mental course, much more than the livelier exchanges he could permit himself with Lady Hesketh and his friend Joseph Hill. The identity of the correspondents matters, too, in a way that is never true for Horace Walpole. He can select suitable recipients for each message, and when Horace Mann dies there is a short list of possible successors ready to hand. Beside this, there is a whole underwood of minor correspondences sprouting on the margin of the main cultivated clumps, where Montagu and Lady Ossory and Mme du Deffand are to be found. By contrast, Cowper has almost no casual correspondence, or none preserved. The narrow range is partly self-imposed: he is rather good at the discouraging reply to an unwanted epistle. It took someone very thick-skinned, like the uncrushable attorney-poet of Hay-on-Wye, Walter Churchill, to persist.

Yet the narrowness is also the narrowness of Olney, a condition so palpable that Cowper could regard his move two miles down the road to Weston as a great liberation. Like a good Calvinist, he always had an eye out for these epochal moments: "The stile of dispensation peculiar to myself has hitherto been that of sudden, violent, unlook'd for change. When I have thought myself falling into the abyss I have been caught up again; when I have thought myself on the threshold of a happy eternity, I have been thrust down to Hell." The move coincided with the death of Mrs Unwio's son William: with it, as the third volume of letters opens, came a growing intimacy with the Catholic gentry of Weston. Mr and Mrs Throckmorton, Newton's suspicions were predictably aroused: coming on top of a jealous tiff with Unwio over editorial help on *The Task*, this set up a distance between Cowper and Newton which was never fully bridged.

The sense of distance, a gap, as an abyss, is seldom absent for long. Cowper's original recuperation had refused to see him as a man, but from that escape to nowhere. Self-preservation entailed a willed retreat from the stream of history. This tactical withdrawal may be illustrated from two major concerns. First, literature: he speaks of himself in 1789 as one "to whom every thing that has passed in the literary world within these five and twenty years, is news". It took the appearance of Johnson's *Lives* to bring to Cowper's notice one man, "a poet of no great fame, of whom I did not know that he existed 'till I found him there

... He was hardly in his senses. His name was Collins." Turning insularity into a virtue, he told Hill that he never touched English poetry, "being pretty much addicted to the writing of it, and knowing that much intercourse with those gentlemen, betrays us unavoidably into a habit of imitation." Coming on Robert Burns in 1787, he responds warmly enough, although wishing the poet to "divest himself of barbarism", apparent both in "his measure and his language". It is a case, he writes to Lady Hesketh (in a passage not available in the previous standard edition of the letters, by Thomas Wright), of a nightingale acquiring the scream of a jay - "a man may whistle well, but if his breath be offensive one would not wish to sit within wind of him". Most astonishing is the fact that Cowper has to borrow a copy of *The Odyssey* in order to translate it: he owned scarcely anything except for a Horace. Oddly, it was this benighted provincial who was employed by the *Analytical Review* to supply notices of *The Botanic Garden*, Joel Barlow's *Vision of Columbus*, and a work on Friesian ornithology.

He did, it is true, read books lent by friends, although it took quite a lot of persuasion to get him to start on the Abbé Raynal. What he simply wouldn't do, increasingly, was take much intelligent interest in the world around him. "I find the Politics of times past far more intelligible than those of the present", he tells Newton on one occasion. Having regarded the American War at first with blithe confidence (there is no reference at all to the Declaration of Independence), he finds the news from Yorktown disconcerting, but chiefly because it means discarding two flag-waving poems "that I was rather proud of". He makes a vague reference to Fox's East India Bill and to the Peace of Versailles in 1783, without much sense of engagement. There is no allusion to the events in France of 1789, and just an oblique mention of the flight to Varennes. As for *The Rights of Man*, "I have not seen Payne's book, but refused to see it when it was offered to me. No man shall convince me that I am inferior to government while I feel the contrary." (So, years before, he had declined to read *The Clarendon Marriage* - it would be bound to give "more pain than pleasure", knowing George Colman as he did.) He will avert his eyes and no one shall save him. There is scarcely a line about Burke or Wilkes; nothing about the spectacular events surrounding his school-friend Warren Hastings and Elijah Impey; a mere blanket dismissal

of the work of that other Westminster product, Edward Gibbon. The Handel celebrations of 1784 are swept aside ("a fiddle would have made a figure in Episcopalian hands").

About the only interest in contemporary ideas which manifests itself is a kindly reference to physiognomy as "improved into a Science" by the ingenious Mr Lavater - although one might add a hesitant welcome to "the Secret of Animal Magnetism". Cowper was doubtful whether Mesmer's therapies could aid his depression, but unwilling to pooch the method. As for himself, he put more faith in various cathartics, emetics and diuretics. Like others afflicted by the school of sensibility, he seems to have felt that keeping one's pores and one's bowels open lay at the heart of creativity. He speaks of being "delivered of the Emetic and the verse in the same moment", and this is more than a chance connection. His opinion (outmoded by a generation or so) that "a very robust athletic habit seems inconsistent with much sensibility" suggests not quite valetudinarianism, but a vague notion that all these disabilities (weak eyes, lumbago; canker of the tongue) are somehow disordered ebullitions of a trapped soul. Creativity, says Wolfgang Iltis, is determined in a case like Mozart's by "a constitutional anomaly... Great minds... have always preferred to have sickly, delicate, unassuming bodies, so that they might confront their physical weakness and overcome it again and again." (It is a poignant thought that this edition of the letters has now reached December 1791: Cowper had most likely never heard of Mozart, and thought anyway that "Musie in season and out of season... destroys the spiritual discernment.") For Cowper the creative is not like a pain: it derives from pain and assuages this only for the time that the process of composition lasts.

Instead, then, of vigorous engagement with the larger life of the time, what do we have? A battle with Cowper's own past, and an unrelenting struggle with the burden of poetic history in the shape of Pope, whose negative influence makes Cowper anxious and yet fertile. Vivid evocations of simple life in the provinces: occasional spurts into fantasy and allegory - ballooning struck Cowper forcibly, as it did Johnson and Walpole, and he dreams of a time "when these airy excursions will be universal, when Judges will fly the Circuit, and Bishops their Visitations, and when the Tour of

Europe will be perform'd with much greater speed and with equal advantage by all who travel merely for the sake of having it to say, that they have made it". There is a certain amount about the mechanics of translating Homer: a good deal more on the subject of mounting the Homer subscription, where Cowper shows a distinct nose for business and writes tart little instructions to his publisher Joseph Johnson. There are the famous vignettes of the world as it goes in Olney: best of all here, the description of a visit by the parliamentary candidate, William Wyndham Grenville, in March 1784, which affords Cowper space for useful observation ("Candidates are creatures not very susceptible of affronts, and would rather I suppose climb to a window than be absolutely excluded").

Not many of these letters are totally new. However, the three volumes which have so far appeared contain, understandably, fuller and more reliable texts than Wright was able to provide in 1904. James King and Charles Ryskamp promise one further volume of letters, which will trace somewhat dispiriting human course and also a volume of reviews and miscellaneous writings. In prose. Along with the parallel series of *Poems* from Oxford in progress, edited by Ryskamp together with John D. Baird, the edition will put to the test the long-heralded Cowper revival, to see if it can sustain momentum. A selection is due out elsewhere, and monographs are on their way to supplement the new study by Bill Hutchings. There are very few complaints one could raise against the editorial work on the *Letters*, although I wish the Cowper family tree had been taken over from Wright along with his hope. The notes are consistently helpful, and seldom stray from their high general standard of accuracy. One might just suggest that the Sheridan who would delight to meet a bigot "to propriety of pronunciation" would not be Richard Brinsley, but his father Thomas. Cowper's reference to a change "from St Giles's to Grosvenor Square" has nothing to do with Cripple Alley or "the comparatively rural environs" of Grosvenor Square, but alludes to the social distance between St Giles in the Fields and the West End. A "portly quarrel" is not just a "party of four" but specifically a mixed foursome (hence its occasional side-swapping overtones today). And to gloss *Monumentum are penitus* with the reference "Horace, *Odes*, I, iii.30" suggests an ear out very attentive to the sound and shape of the poetry - try III. xxx.1, rather.

Bill Hutchings has written a good, straightforward account of Cowper the poet. He plays down the confessional element, stresses the separation of man and writer, and tends to see "formal invocation rather than personal agony" in the address to God in some of the hymns. Characteristic phrases run along the lines, "the effects are carefully wrought", and a good deal is made of "control" - maybe too much, for some tastes. Disappointingly, "John Gilpin" is left aside, but other favourite poems are convincingly discussed, including "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture" (which, by the way, is bafflingly absent from the notes in King and Ryskamp, though the text describes the picture's arrival). Hutchings rightly points to the influence of Prior and Churchill, among others, on Cowper's style: he insists that *The Task* is "a profoundly intelligent work, the production of a fine literary imagination operating with a frankness which is deliberately disarming in its apparent naivety". All in all, this is a judicious appraisal of the poetry, especially those parts of the oeuvre which fit the slightly Augustanized touchstone - "the merits of controlled, and purposeful conversation". The best thing about Hutchings is his determination not to undersell his subject. As a general introduction to Cowper, it easily outdistances the indifferent competition: Belphe first, and the rest elsewhere. Let us hope that other works will follow in a more specialized vein, so that so much more of Cowper's writing is becoming available in good editions.

Land Love

We stood here in the coupledom of us.
I showed her this - a pool with leaping trout,
Split-second salts drawn in a rippled almbus.

We heard the night-boys in the fir trees shout.
Dusk was as lush-hoovered still water,
The calling of lost children, stars coming out.

With all the feelings of a widower
Who does not live there now, I dream my place.
I go by the soft paths, alone with her.

Dusk is a liltolog, a whispered grace
Voiced on a bank, a time that is all ears
For the snapped twig, the strange wind on your face.

She waits at the door of the hamlet where
In her harvest dress, in the remote
Local August that is everywhere and here.

What rustles in the leaves, if it is not
What I asked for, an opening of doors
To a half-beard religious anecdote?

Monogamous swans on the darkened mirrors
Platura the private graces of man and wife
In its white poise, its sleepy portraiture.

Night is its Dog Star, its eyelid of grief
A high, lit echo of the starry sheaves.
A puff of hedge-dust looms in the leaves.
Such love that lingers on the fields of life!

Douglas Dunn

A hide-out in the forest

S. S. Praver

ARNO SCHMIDT

Scenes from the Life of a Faun: A Short Novel

Translated by John E. Woods

159pp. Marion Boyars. £7.95.
0 7145 2762 9

When Arno Schmidt died, on Whit-Sunday 1979, modern German prose lost its greatest virtuoso. But the many delightful language-games he played in his later novels never became an end in themselves. They were always firmly kept in the service of expression—the expression of a quirky personality, a reviewing, from self-chosen provincial seclusion, the antics of politicians, civil servants, farmers or television actors, while also communing with nature, drawing on memories of earlier experiences and activities, and living a rich inner life in the company of books, maps and a few friends. In each of these novels there is a central consciousness which directs and guides the reader's attention. These narrator-figures all have a family resemblance; their opinions and prejudices are very close to those which Schmidt expressed more directly in his mid-essays, just as the regions and landscapes through which they move are usually those which we know Schmidt to have inhabited at various periods of his life. There is enough deliberate divergence, however, between "real" self and invented persona to allow the author to play enjoyable games of hide-and-seek; games which include mentioning "Arno Schmidt", either directly or by means of an acrostic, much as Hitchcock "signed" his films by making a brief appearance in his own portrait person.

The central consciousness of *Scenes from the Life of a Faun*—an early novel which first appeared in 1953—is one Heinrich Düring, a head clerk in a provincial government office just before, and during, the Second World War. Though he despises most of his office colleagues, he likes some of them, along with their clients and most of the people he encounters at home. Even his own wife and children are seen, not without reason, through very jaundiced eyes. In his early fifties, he is drawn to a solidly built young woman in her teens whom he first encounters when she is still at school, and with whom he has a passionate sexual relationship. When the hated *Lauder*, who is his department chief and with whom he plays some wonderful power games while acting the perfectly obedient and subservient German employee, selects him to make a historical and topographical survey of the rural district he administers, Düring discovers, in some rural archives, documents relating to a French deserter during the Napoleonic Wars. With the help of these documents he finds that deserter's forest hide-out, which he adopts as his own and where he becomes, in his own mind, the "faun" of the title. Such hide-outs in the forest are illegal, however. Tracked down and in imminent danger of discovery, Düring decides to set fire to his wooden refuge. Before he can carry out his intention, however, the deserter's wife, but serves him one more time: it shelters him and his young beloved when an air raid sets off tremendous explosions in the local munitions factory and its underground stores. After witnessing scenes of terrible carnage, the ill-matched lovers reach the forest, but spend a passionate night together after tending their—happily minor—injuries, and then, in one last symbolic action, abandon and destroy the "faun's" hide-out.

Scenes from the Life of a Faun is written in a form that Arno Schmidt has likened, in various theoretical writings, to a snapshot album and a necklace of pearls. A flash of observation or memory, often interspersed with, or followed by, reflection forms a single "snapshot" or constitutes a single "pearl": which is immediately followed by another. The flash, or the pearls around which the pearl, constitutes a "flash" or "pearl". For example, the second part of this short novel begins with the narrator's arrival

in the village of Rethem whose archives he intends to examine:

The bright village: awakening, it threw open all its shiny windows; every house crowded like a cock, and curtains flapped pastel wings to the tune. (One pair was covered with big red polka dots; pretty, against the puffed-up bright yellow).

Bushes in their scaly sea-green capes appeared, trembling and yawning, along all the paths and waved me on ever further down the road; stood as spectators of the edges of meadows; did trim gymnastics; whispered wantonly with chlorophyll tongues, or suddenly whistled loud trills; the bushes.

The mud in her violet smock tipped the waste bucket and its glittering yellow liquid, so that the black flies below her murmured. Blue-scarred cabbage and fleshy onion spikes. The nimble door gave another whack; and confirmed the stillness. Good. (Stillness: good!)

Snouts of wind grubbed all through the grass, snowing a bit, like blue yearling boars prunting. A dog burst out of his wooden cage on all fours and ricocheted back and forth, making his chain rattle-snake and yelping. "Mornin', Herr Veinikel" (In Rethem).

"I can go right out down now?": I can go right out down now.

In the underground archives: whitewashed walls, and mice in all

highest order. It is also rigorously modern, so much so that reactionary screams of indignation have no credence whatever. And yet, for all that, it is an afflicted intelligence, trapped by its own modernity in which, as Müll noted, the multiple systems of thought already in existence render any original thought impossible. The mind of Sollers resembles a machine that can absorb a massive amount of data, master it, process it, and turn it out again, in an order (or disorder) that deprives it of meaning or seriousness. One reason for this is his chronic need to be invulnerable: no critical instrument is sharp enough to pierce his peculiar *jargon-foufoules*. But the laughter in this post-modernist picaresque novel is merciless. Its gaiety seems often to be forced, its humour always tragicomic: the "immense humour du no-été" that he talks about in *Paradis*. However, who can deny that his attitude is one of the very few still available to the derelict metropolitan who has, as it were, seen it all?

Why all this talk about men? "Le monde appartient aux femmes" Men are "spume, false leaders, false priests, approximate thinkers, insects." Such are the findings of Sollers, or rather his "narrator", in *Femmes*. This narrator is a cunning invention: an American journalist who lives in Paris and who has befriended "un certain S.", a scandalous writer whose name rates high on the IFN scale, the *frigid internationale Flottaison-des-Noms*. Given this intertextual between author and narrator, Sollers does not miss a single opportunity to discuss himself at length: the enigmatic S. The narrator glacially conveys S.'s name: is mentioned in conversation; how he continues to live, remaining a master, self-publicist. What is the demon that controls and drives forward his projects with such undegging energy and discipline? For the rest, the narrator might not exist, as his similarities to S. are uncanny, even down to sharing with him certain very gloomy views on the Virgin Mary. He seems very much a tourist in New York and an extraordinary at home in the inner circle of Saint-Germain. An American—journalist cum Catholic—beamed by that as it may be, is who holds the future of the world in his hands. He is only one of several intellectual figures who, as converts, material by FAIR (Front Autonome Multiculturel), the French branch of the American organization WOMANN

(World Organization for Men Annihilation and for a New Nativity). Dark initiates then, underground conspiracies, and part of the post-modernist apparatus from Pynchon to Sollers.

The formal aims of WOMANN include, briefly, the elimination of sexist art and literature; education; the annihilation of the Judeo-Christian patriarchal tradition, especially in the form of Catholicism; the establishment of a régime controlled by women and based on broadly drawn Marxist-Freudian lines. Our gallant and, it seems, highly potent narrator drifts somewhat aimlessly from continent to continent, city to city, always at the beck and call of one or other of these organization women. It is soon clear that these ladies demand their sexual rights as before, and his endless orotic adventures, described in detail and with verve, significantly enough form the only events in the novel that seem real. They give it a semblance of progression. Who exactly are these women? First there is the brilliant Deborah—in fact a rather leader portrait of Sollers's wife, Julie Kristine. Then there is Cyd, a sensual English girl who lives in New York, works in films and specializes in fellatio; there is Fiam, a Spanish revolutionary and a disciple of Fals, who favours deep penetration; Ysio, an electrifying Japanese girl in the tourist business and Bernadette, known as "la Présidente", the frigid lesbian leader of FAM. But even she is not proof against the irresistible sexual fascination exerted by S.'s talented friend. There is also a contradiction here: the aim of all these women remains patriarchal control. They need orgasms: men are useful. They demand children: men are sperm-banks. The enormous difference being, of course, that they can now dictate when they want these things. Their capacity for refusal is as great as a man's.

All these women, in their different ways, try to keep the narrator on the straight and narrow path, as the useful convert to their cause. But as the story progresses he starts to show alarming deviations. First of all he is writing a novel to be called *Femmes*. Dark rumours circulate about the purity of his attitude: worse still, he exhibits a growing fascination for Catholicism, a about establishing an ironic cult of the BVM. He is drawn in Catholicism because of its past absurdity. He has a tender regard for the Scriptures, and is quite obsessed by dogs. Especially the Assumption of Mary. (He recalls

the boxes: little black mannikins, did inquisitive nicrochats along the walls, leapt in arches, dwelt in Rethemic labyrinths. (bring some bread crumbs along tomorrow).

Schmidt plays a multitude of variations on this simple pattern—a pattern that proves most effective for the portrayal of a world apprehended by a strongly marked personality with a powerful inner life. This technique has since become familiar through the novels of Walter Kempowski; but if one reads Kempowski after Schmidt, the former comes to seem very small beer indeed.

The world which this central consciousness apprehends is one made hideous by the Nazis. Düring is an outwardly conforming as any of his fellow-citizens; he has experienced a pogrom, he hears of concentration-camp cruelties from a party-member who has taken part in them (no "we didn't know" alibi for Arno Schmidt), but his only outwardly visible act of dissent is his refusal to join the SA or another such party-organization. His dissent and his rage are bottled up inside, where they mingle with amused contempt for all those who have been fooled by "charismatic" leaders throughout history. The hide-out in the forest and its voluntary destruction before authority has sniffed it out becomes a potent symbol, paralleling the catastrophe described in the most violent passages Arno Schmidt was ever to write: that caused by the

blowing up of vast underground munition stores, a miniature image of the catastrophe caused by the Third Reich and inpotently foreseen by the narrator.

Düring's interior voice says many harsh things about his fellow-Germans; but Schmidt leaves us in no doubt of his narrator's own essential and ineradicable Germanness. The continuation of a rich inner life with an outer life dictated by conscientious *Pflichterfüllung*, loving apprehension of a rural landscape that has few dramatic attractions, but is all the more dear for that: a host of literary allusions, quotations and reminiscences—these and other features remind, and are meant to remind, Schmidt's readers of German traditions that reach from *Aufklärung* and Romanticism to Biedermeier and Poetic Realism. The German Expressionists, outlived by the Nazis whose words and painters Düring despises as much as he loves older German forms of pictorial and verbal art, become particularly important. The book is full of allusions to Expressionist painting, and it deliberately employs the techniques pioneered by Expressionist writers, ranging from August Stramm to the younger Döblin, as one possible means of repairing the damage the Third Reich had done to the German language and of building a bridge between post-war German literature and respectable Modernist traditions. In Schmidt's later work the place here

occupied by the Expressionists was taken by James Joyce.

Alongside the often chosen German writers who form Heinrich Düring's literary pantheon are English and American writers, both again and again. They include Cooper, Poe and Sir Walter Scott. The most potent presence of all, however, is that of Jonathan Swift: his deep with Yahoo humanity, the serene misanthropy of some of the Brobagnian scenes, seem appropriate responses to a Germany in which one's very act of greeting a neighbour or a colleague distorted into huffing (or hawking) misdeeds of his people, who nauseating speech and presence could not be removed by a catastrophic sense constantly, though *Scenes from the Life of a Faun* ends with Germany's final capitulation.

Reading Arno Schmidt can be addictive. I was first captivated by him in the 1960s, and know no great war German literature. *Scenes from the Life of a Faun* is a splendid example of his early manner and an excellent introduction to his work as a whole and Schmidt's gifts. A good translator has once again conveyed author's form and meaning with success. Those who fall under the novel's spell will, I hope, also be urging the same translator to give the other two novels which Schmidt issued together with this one in 1964 under the title *Nobodaddy's Kids*.

JEAN-PIERRE

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highest order. It is also rigorously modern, so much so that reactionary screams of indignation have no credence whatever. And yet, for all that, it is an afflicted intelligence, trapped by its own modernity in which, as Müll noted, the multiple systems of thought already in existence render any original thought impossible. The mind of Sollers resembles a machine that can absorb a massive amount of data, master it, process it, and turn it out again, in an order (or disorder) that deprives it of meaning or seriousness. One reason for this is his chronic need to be invulnerable: no critical instrument is sharp enough to pierce his peculiar *jargon-foufoules*. But the laughter in this post-modernist picaresque novel is merciless. Its gaiety seems often to be forced, its humour always tragicomic: the "immense humour du no-été" that he talks about in *Paradis*. However, who can deny that his attitude is one of the very few still available to the derelict metropolitan who has, as it were, seen it all?

Why all this talk about men? "Le monde appartient aux femmes" Men are "spume, false leaders, false priests, approximate thinkers, insects." Such are the findings of Sollers, or rather his "narrator", in *Femmes*. This narrator is a cunning invention: an American journalist who lives in Paris and who has befriended "un certain S.", a scandalous writer whose name rates high on the IFN scale, the *frigid internationale Flottaison-des-Noms*. Given this intertextual between author and narrator, Sollers does not miss a single opportunity to discuss himself at length: the enigmatic S. The narrator glacially conveys S.'s name: is mentioned in conversation; how he continues to live, remaining a master, self-publicist. What is the demon that controls and drives forward his projects with such undegging energy and discipline? For the rest, the narrator might not exist, as his similarities to S. are uncanny, even down to sharing with him certain very gloomy views on the Virgin Mary. He seems very much a tourist in New York and an extraordinary at home in the inner circle of Saint-Germain. An American—journalist cum Catholic—beamed by that as it may be, is who holds the future of the world in his hands. He is only one of several intellectual figures who, as converts, material by FAIR (Front Autonome Multiculturel), the French branch of the American organization WOMANN

(World Organization for Men Annihilation and for a New Nativity). Dark initiates then, underground conspiracies, and part of the post-modernist apparatus from Pynchon to Sollers.

The formal aims of WOMANN include, briefly, the elimination of sexist art and literature; education; the annihilation of the Judeo-Christian patriarchal tradition, especially in the form of Catholicism; the establishment of a régime controlled by women and based on broadly drawn Marxist-Freudian lines. Our gallant and, it seems, highly potent narrator drifts somewhat aimlessly from continent to continent, city to city, always at the beck and call of one or other of these organization women. It is soon clear that these ladies demand their sexual rights as before, and his endless orotic adventures, described in detail and with verve, significantly enough form the only events in the novel that seem real. They give it a semblance of progression. Who exactly are these women? First there is the brilliant Deborah—in fact a rather leader portrait of Sollers's wife, Julie Kristine. Then there is Cyd, a sensual English girl who lives in New York, works in films and specializes in fellatio; there is Fiam, a Spanish revolutionary and a disciple of Fals, who favours deep penetration; Ysio, an electrifying Japanese girl in the tourist business and Bernadette, known as "la Présidente", the frigid lesbian leader of FAM. But even she is not proof against the irresistible sexual fascination exerted by S.'s talented friend. There is also a contradiction here: the aim of all these women remains patriarchal control. They need orgasms: men are useful. They demand children: men are sperm-banks. The enormous difference being, of course, that they can now dictate when they want these things. Their capacity for refusal is as great as a man's.

All these women, in their different ways, try to keep the narrator on the straight and narrow path, as the useful convert to their cause. But as the story progresses he starts to show alarming deviations. First of all he is writing a novel to be called *Femmes*. Dark rumours circulate about the purity of his attitude: worse still, he exhibits a growing fascination for Catholicism, a about establishing an ironic cult of the BVM. He is drawn in Catholicism because of its past absurdity. He has a tender regard for the Scriptures, and is quite obsessed by dogs. Especially the Assumption of Mary. (He recalls

the boxes: little black mannikins, did inquisitive nicrochats along the walls, leapt in arches, dwelt in Rethemic labyrinths. (bring some bread crumbs along tomorrow).

Schmidt plays a multitude of variations on this simple pattern—a pattern that proves most effective for the portrayal of a world apprehended by a strongly marked personality with a powerful inner life. This technique has since become familiar through the novels of Walter Kempowski; but if one reads Kempowski after Schmidt, the former comes to seem very small beer indeed.

The world which this central consciousness apprehends is one made hideous by the Nazis. Düring is an outwardly conforming as any of his fellow-citizens; he has experienced a pogrom, he hears of concentration-camp cruelties from a party-member who has taken part in them (no "we didn't know" alibi for Arno Schmidt), but his only outwardly visible act of dissent is his refusal to join the SA or another such party-organization. His dissent and his rage are bottled up inside, where they mingle with amused contempt for all those who have been fooled by "charismatic" leaders throughout history. The hide-out in the forest and its voluntary destruction before authority has sniffed it out becomes a potent symbol, paralleling the catastrophe described in the most violent passages Arno Schmidt was ever to write: that caused by the

blowing up of vast underground munition stores, a miniature image of the catastrophe caused by the Third Reich and inpotently foreseen by the narrator.

Düring's interior voice says many harsh things about his fellow-Germans; but Schmidt leaves us in no doubt of his narrator's own essential and ineradicable Germanness. The continuation of a rich inner life with an outer life dictated by conscientious *Pflichterfüllung*, loving apprehension of a rural landscape that has few dramatic attractions, but is all the more dear for that: a host of literary allusions, quotations and reminiscences—these and other features remind, and are meant to remind, Schmidt's readers of German traditions that reach from *Aufklärung* and Romanticism to Biedermeier and Poetic Realism. The German Expressionists, outlived by the Nazis whose words and painters Düring despises as much as he loves older German forms of pictorial and verbal art, become particularly important. The book is full of allusions to Expressionist painting, and it deliberately employs the techniques pioneered by Expressionist writers, ranging from August Stramm to the younger Döblin, as one possible means of repairing the damage the Third Reich had done to the German language and of building a bridge between post-war German literature and respectable Modernist traditions. In Schmidt's later work the place here

occupied by the Expressionists was taken by James Joyce.

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HENRY PACTER

Wolmar Etudes

387pp. Columbia University Press.

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In 1981, shortly after Henry Pacter's death, Martin Jay wrote a memorial note for *Salmagundi* in which he recalled a conference on the culture of the Weimar Republic that had taken place at the New School for Social Research ten years before. The general tone of this gathering of notable exiles was, he wrote, celebratory and even complacent, and Pacter became annoyed at "what he perceived as the puffery of the proceedings". When it was his turn to speak, he chose to make fun of Karl Mannheim's comparison of Weimar and Periclean Athens, saying, among other things: "Perhaps the Weimar Republic was not a Periclean Age at all, but the age of Marlene Dietrich. We were no great innovators; we were innovators on a small scale. We did not generate the great ideas that reading pleasure in the whole of our social, economic and political life. Far from 'freely floating', we were being floated and coaxed and pushed. There was a generation of first-rate mediocrities; never have there been so many brilliant failures, so many excellent second-raters..."

This dash of cold water upon a gathering that was verging on pretentiousness was characteristic of Pacter's style in intellectual discourse. He was always a forthright critic of loose generalization, skewed perspective and failure to see the relationship between idea and reality, and he was ever mindful of the distorting power of nostalgia. A German refugee himself, he could on occasion insist that the Weimar Republic was one of the freest states that ever existed, "the most open and lively of all the systems I have ever known", but he was made uncomfortable by the contemporary tendency to exaggerate its cultural achievements while ignoring the murderous internecine tensions that lay beneath the glamorous surface. What should be remembered, he said in his lecture in 1971, was that "if Weimar was Periclean, then it was so in the sense that the original Periclean Age too was a time of mortal crisis".

Wolmar Etudes, Pacter's last book, deals with this crisis in no very systematic way, but the essays that comprise it—studies, for the most part, of Weimar personalities and intellectual tendencies—do illuminate the often repeated statement that the republic died of a death of convinced republicans. In the long autobiographical fragment that serves as a prelude to the volume, Pacter makes it clear that his own republican

sympathies were slow in developing. Although he did some work for the Democratic Party as early as 1920, when he was thirteen, this attachment was soon undermined by his simultaneous membership in the Jugendbewegung, which turned his thoughts, like those of many of his contemporaries, from the mundane tasks upon which democracy depended to more grandiose political ideas about a total reform of the ways in which Germans lived and the creation of a true *Gemeinschaft*, a united community, that would be freed from the burden of history and the restrictions imposed by tradition and purged of materialism and the worldly cynicism of old-fashioned politics.

Pacter was later to recognize this as an exaggerated form of romantic utopianism, and his generation's fascination with Nietzsche, as a foreshadowing of that flight from logic that facilitated Hitler's rise to power. (In two essays in this book, "Irrationalism and the Paralysis of Reason" and "Aggression as Cultural Rebellion", he comes close to making Nietzsche the real villain of Germany's plight. Far from 'freely floating', we were being floated and coaxed and pushed. There was a generation of first-rate mediocrities; never have there been so many brilliant failures, so many excellent second-raters...")

Henry Pacter

JEAN-PIERRE

Death of a republic

Gordon A. Craig

Korski to found a new party and then, when that failed, by joining various splinter groups, like the Libertarian Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party, meanwhile teaching his own brand of socialism in adult schools and workers' gatherings in the Neu-Kölln section of Berlin. But the increasing polarization of politics convinced him that the dissident groupings on the left lacked the resources, organization and working-class support that were necessary in a time of crisis and, with great reluctance, he decided in the end to join the Social Democratic Party.

In doing so, it was his hope, as it was that of other young socialists like Carlo Mierendorff and Julius Leber, and Kurt Schumacher, to re-awaken the combative spirit of the SPD and to humanize its goals and, by doing so, to make it the rallying point for the defence of the Republic. But this was quickly proven to be impossible because, as Pacter writes, "on the one hand, they attempted to lure a desperate *Mittelstand* into the... party could not compete with the dogmatism of the fascists, who better understood the hatred those social strata felt for the Republic and for all the progressive values associated with it. On the other hand, this group's militancy as well as the coherence of its innovative program put the youngsters at odds with a party leadership that had grown old and rigid." Party meetings were always filled with elderly citizens who were more interested in drinking beer and playing skat than they were in speeches that deviated from the editorial line in *Vorwärts*. The party's structure militated against an energetic response to the threat from the right, and, sensing this, its president opted for pragmatism and decided to support Brüning rather than to follow the line of the young radicals. This course, short-sighted because it imposed no conditions upon Brüning and his associates, and the wanton folly of 1932 collaborating with Hitler's storm troops in attacks upon the public order, made impossible the kind of concerted action by the left that Pacter believed was the only alternative to National Socialism.

Whether the collapse of the first German experiment in democracy was not made inevitable by earlier failures of the left was a problem that long concerned Pacter, and this volume includes a rather tentative essay called "Was Weimar Necessary?" in which he suggests that a vigorous attempt by the Majority and Independent Socialists in 1919 to give power to the Soldiers and Workers Councils (*Räte*) might have supplied the new republic with a healthier political base. This pays tribute to his persistent faith in the energy and will of the masses, but any objective view of the situation in 1919 indicates that the councils had neither

the desire nor the strength to effect a far-reaching revolution and that if, as Pacter writes, "the withering away of the state", which was the aim of the game of the parties", this was probably unavoidable.

Pacter is undoubtedly correct in arguing that, in that struggle, the opponents of democracy always found it easier to mobilize support than its friends. A notable feature of the cultural life of the Republic was the antipathy of its leading representatives towards the Weimar constitution and those who served it in the government and the parliament. This was understandable in the case of Communist writers for *Die Linkskurve* and of ideologues like Moeller van den Bruck, Oswald Spengler and Ernst Juenger, who, in Pacter's words, "prepared the ideological tools for a revolution from the night", but it was less so in the case of the *freischwebenden Intellektuellen*. Despite the fact that they were given more freedom to express themselves than was provided by any other contemporary political system, they responded with resentment and studied alienation, either because the Republic did not give them the status and the authority that accorded with their view of their own importance, or, as Pacter suggests bitterly, because "German authors have a special knack of turning every Young Werther's sorrows into charges against society".

The established writers were no better. Hauptmann, once a socialist, was by now "wallowing in romantic eclecticism"; Thomas Mann's commitment to the Republic was accompanied by curious reversions to the irrationalism and aestheticism of his wartime book, *Reflections of an Unpolitical Man*; and Hermann Hesse, to whom Pacter devotes a brief and vigorous reassessment, was, in his view, a seducer of youth, a trail-blazer in the retreat from the technocratic twentieth century to a utopian age "where magic would provide for the material and spiritual needs of mankind", and a writer whose works should be "put on the shelf of poisonous books, next to Zaratustra".

As for the academic intellectuals, the great majority were conservative, reactionary, and even Nazi-oriented, whereas the minority who rallied to the Republic were right-wing liberals who did not for the most part engage in party politics. In two of the most substantial essays in this volume, Pacter examines the attitudes of these groups by focusing upon the work of two representative figures, the philosopher Martin Heidegger and the dean of Weimar historians, Friedrich Meinecke. In the former case, he argues that Heidegger's brief association with National Socialism, which began with the famous rectoral

address at the University of Freiburg in 1933, an oration that Pacter dismisses as "glibness", was perhaps of less importance than the inherent tendency of his life work, which, with its exaltation of sacrifice and fascination with death, was basically anti-humanist and proto-Fascist. The essay on Meinecke, subtitled "The Tragedy of German Liberalism", describes the historian's life-long attempt to reconcile the actions of the national state and the ideals of German humanism and the way in which it eventuated in a philosophy of history (*Historismus*) which held that whatever "springs from the innermost essence of a natural being cannot be immoral". This helped, Pacter argues, to legitimize other forces that, since Bismarck's time, had been emasculating liberalism's traditional anti-authoritarian stance, for, in the last analysis, "Historismus" always sanctions the result of the power struggle. When the victory and subsequent behaviour of the National Socialists revealed with brutal clarity what the consequences of this attitude were, Meinecke, in his last works, evaded any comment upon the responsibility for this, preferring, like many of his countrymen and in language not unlike Heidegger's, to take refuge in rumination about the play of destiny and chance in history.

After Hitler came to power, Pacter and his fiancée collaborated with Richard Löwenthal in putting out the first underground resistance paper, *Proletarische Aktion*, but by the end of 1933 it was clear that the new regime was not ephemeral and that local resistance would not only be increasingly dangerous but largely ineffective. He therefore went into exile, first to France, and then in 1940, by way of Spain and Portugal, to the United States, where he had a distinguished career as teacher in the City College of New York and the New School for Social Research and as a regular contributor to *Dissent* and *Salmagundi* as well as to several European newspapers, and where, in all of his activities, he remained true to the principles of humanistic socialism that had inspired him since his youth. The last chapter of *Wolmar Etudes* is a charming essay on being an exile, in which Pacter has many good things to say about getting to know the United States ("I always tell European visitors that they should not be misled by the white skin and English or near-English language of the Americans they meet, that they will not understand American until they pretend that all the people here have green hair and are playing a game the rules of which the observer is supposed to guess") as well as some shrewd comments upon the fundamental differences between the American and European cultures that contribute to the present difficulties in the Western alliance.

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Hepa-Maes-Jelinek's *Wolmar Etudes* (191pp. Twayne's World Atlantic Series, \$17.95), a study by the authority on Harris, examines the whole corpus of the novelist's original works. It is useful as an introduction because of clarification of the basic artistic and philosophical issues. Professor Jelinek's complete immersion in Harris's rich and paradoxical insight into the networks of metaphor and metaphor makes this an invaluable for a more advanced reader. This is the best critical book on the subject.

Henry Pacter

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Looking on the black side

Dick Wilson

Fox Butterfield

China: Alive in the Bitter Sea
468pp. Hodder and Stoughton.
£9.95.
0 340 26239 7

Communist China used to be celebrated by visiting writers in heroic vein, just as India was similarly romanticized by the West until Katherine Mayo wrote a disturbing account of its sexual practices from a woman's point of view (Gandhi called it a "drain inspector's report"). Fox Butterfield's welcome book on China is not so specialized, although it does make the very Mayo-like point, inter alia, that the female orgasm seems elusive in that society. Since it probes the personal life and unofficial thoughts of the Chinese it turns what might be called a private eye on China, with shocking results for those used to the old heroics.

After a generation of books concentrating necessarily on the regime's leaders and the broad issues, this work by a young *New York Times* correspondent fluent in Chinese has taken the particularities of China as its theme, and it provides a sober antidote to those earlier volumes. Butterfield was in China in 1979-81 in the relatively liberal phase of the Deng Xiaoping regime, when the doors were opened just a little, especially to Americans, and it was possible for foreigners to get to know the Chinese through casual encounters, with little official harassment.

A government which for thirty years had been extraordinarily successful in manipulating information to its short-term advantage now stood back to little. The persistently probing, almost pedantic Butterfield took easy advantage of the new opportunities to explore a China denied to his predecessors. His findings are couched in the *New York Times* style - wordy, far too detailed, but irrepressibly inquisitive, magisterially fair-minded and invariably letting the informant tell his own story in his own words.

And it is mostly the story of what might be called China's "black society": people and problems which fail to fit into the state mould, outside the planned sector or the unreal

columns of the *People's Daily*, the lost, the damned, the disillusioned, the angry, the frightened. So real does this society become in these pages that one has to ask how representative the data are, how we may quantify the phenomenon. There is no basis on which to decide this question, but Butterfield's contribution depends on numbers much larger than anyone had suspected. Some of his statistics, estimated thoughtfully and not wildly, speak volumes - 400,000 killed in the Cultural Revolution; 460,000 fled to Hongkong in 1975-80; juvenile delinquency up tenfold in twenty years; 30 per cent of urban youth out of work; "hundreds of labour reform camps".

"For all of us", a doctor met on a train concludes, "the revolution is over. What is left is cynicism. It is very sad for China." A young man at a dance describes how his generation felt "manipulated and betrayed" by Mao in the Cultural Revolution. They have seen through things "as a common remark. 'Life in China is a big play, we are all actors', says a teenage girl whose teacher measures her in class to see that her clothes are within the latest guide-lines - not too tight at the hip or wide at the cuff.

A student poll in Shanghai reveals that only a third of the students believe in Marxism. A quarter list "fate" as their belief, another quarter "nothing at all" (a few answer "Christianity"). It is, Butterfield suggests, "an authoritarian country with an authority crisis". Those who a few years ago were made to bow to a bust of Mao twice daily have learnt at least never to trust another Mao. "The old Confucian morality was destroyed," says a middle-aged woman, "now the Communist morality has gone, too." Small wonder the play in which the hero collapses on the ground and dies in the shape of a question-mark was disapproved by the authorities.

Cruelty is never far below the surface. Everyone remembers something from the Cultural Revolution: the girl who saw her mother clubbed to death; the teacher, made to kneel before her class on broken glass, Zhou Enlai's adopted daughter tortured to death. Many of the antagonists still have to live and work together. "I haven't forgiven them," a woman teacher says, "and I wonder how they feel." "Do you know what we do with homosexuals here in China?" so interpreter asks another American

journalist. "We shoot them." Sadly, families keep their oldest clothes in the bottom of a trunk just in case another levelling campaign is launched.

"Communism", a father tells his son, "is like the horizon. The more you approach it, the farther it recedes." A *People's Daily* editor informs Butterfield of the mistake they had made in 1949: "We thought the fundamental problem in China was capitalism. Actually, China was not yet industrialized and didn't have a large bourgeois class. The real problem was feudalism." (To which one is tempted to riposte - yes, but someone else got it right and his name was Chiang Kaishek!) The disarming pragmatism of the Chinese gets many things here. An official in Yunnan province told a visitor that many experiments were being tried - if they worked, they would be called socialist, if not, capitalist.

The most remarkable condemnation of Communism comes, however, not from harassed or alienated intellectuals but from the mouth of a man described merely as a male relative of Mao (presumably his nephew). Socialism, he told Butterfield after dinner, is excellent in theory but weak in practice. "We let the state and bureaucracy grow too strong and prevented the development of individual initiative." What China now needed was to combine the best of both socialism and capitalism, and he cited the Japanese example. One of Deng Xiaoping's advisers offered the astonishing opinion that "not a single element of marxist theory" remained true.

To the ordinary man it is the new class system that rankles. "We have abolished class", an official explains, "but not rank." When a socialist was sent "down to the farm" for educational labour his salary continued to be credited provided he did not tell the peasants it was eighty times their average income! The same Shanghai student poll listed "special privileges" as the country's most serious problem. As a well-heeled general's son puts it: "In China today it's not money but power that people want. Money is very limited in what it can buy, you need connections and rank." In China the best industrial jobs are inherited feudalistically from father to son, and the ties which an individual forms with his work-place or organization - *dowry* - amount to "a kind of industrial feudalism".

It goes without saying that the unsuccessful pursuit of socialism has left living standards at a sadly neglected level. A trained astronaut has neither toilet nor running water in his house. A figure of 3½ square yards of living space per person suggests that it is not just the professionals who suffer. Spending on education per head is less than in Bangladesh. Only three in 100 of college age go to university. Some ask the daring question, "Why can't China do as well as Taiwan?"

Part of the answer lies in the almost unbelievable waste and inefficiency in the Chinese economy. A government economist likens the adoption of the 1950s to "shooting oneself in the foot". A factory worker describes a retirement party for a comrade who cried, since in twenty years the factory never started because it could not get the materials - twenty years of card games on full pay. Steel-mills are kept to one or two-day working every week because of power shortages - from which cause an economist adds the estimate that one quarter of potential industrial output is lost. No one surveys the market to find out its needs before investing. The State Statistical Bureau was down to fourteen staff in the Cultural Revolution - the equivalent of one for the whole of Britain. So enshrined is the afternoon siesta that one middle-class visitor to Hongkong was glad to get back - "it was too hectic, people have to work so hard". A Hongkong industrialist agrees: labour efficiency in the textile plant he has put up in China is only a quarter of what it is in Hongkong establishments. An American engineer who helped build a new chemical plant was stunned when the Chinese manager shut it down on the second day - "we have run out of trucks". Even the managerial reforms of Deng Xiaoping had to be shelved because of vested interests in the old inefficiency and back-passing. The need for face - what Butterfield calls "the extreme sensitivity Chinese have about personal dignity" or "spiritual haemophilia" (quoting George Kotex) - constantly interferes with Western solutions.

China's political dissidents do not need to be exposed; they expose themselves. A Shanghai poster in 1978 praising the US Declaration of Independence - "We ought to have these rights, too" - is perhaps the most poignant example here. And the

correct question is raised: why do China's intellectuals stand so disconcertingly aloof from these very complaints? With the correct answer: because they work from within the system, not outside it. It is the only way to achieve anything in China.

Anyone ready to risk talking to a foreigner must by definition have a grievance. As the police said to the parents of a girl who went out with a European exchange student at Beijing University: "You should educate her not to go out with foreigners. It is a shameful thing for China." It was enbined approval to marry a foreigner. A woman reporter of forty who goes to the *New York Times* about her sex life and that of her colleagues was sent to a labour reform camp. This is one reason for not generalizing this high proportion of it. Butterfield informs turn out to be American or American-trained Chinese who went back in the 1950s to build China, were turned on and tortured in the Cultural Revolution, and now have most to grieve over, and least to hope. The woman next to Butterfield's flight out of China to return to the United States was not going back to China. "I will not make the same mistake my father did" (he was an engineer who went back to do his work in China until broken by the Red Guards). "He wasted his life."

When Butterfield starts to draw general conclusions - about upbringing of children, or the economy - his methods let him down. The impressionism based on specifics and it does not explore the whole of China. But the impression is one of near-genius: all these are or have been "difficult", and all three stand, or stood, in need of explanation.

This is what Neil Corcoran offers in his compact and well-ordered book *The Song of Deeds*, a study of that one poem of David Jones which most critics, though not necessarily most readers, consider to be his masterpiece. The *Anathema*. His examination of it comprises five chapters dealing with the poem's intellectual context, its genesis, content, form and achievement. It certainly cannot be argued that David Jones's thirty-four-page "Preface to *The Anathema*" and the undergrowth of information and direction thriving at the foot of most of the poem's 200 pages have done the job for him. There is just too much stuff, too much matter, too much message to percolate through the verse-stream. The provision of so much apparatus comes out by way of apology, but out of the poet's awareness that he is unlikely to achieve the hardly possible. Even so he has achieved a poetic *tour de force*, a literally wondrous artefact of mind for our time. Mr Corcoran puts it this way: "The *Waste Land*, we might say, is a poem with notes. *The Anathema* is that different, new and disturbing thing, a poem-with-notes." The prose notes, that is, do not so much accompany the verse as seek to make themselves part of a verse-and-prose poem. The poet admittedly doesn't help by advising the reader, "When actually engaged upon the text, to consult these glosses mainly or only on points of pronunciation"; for the normal reaction to a numbered footnote is to read the thing; and I can't be the only reader who finds tips on pronunciation: if it is objected that the notes are not written for wise old owls like me, (too) to what corner of the aviary is this learned, multi-lingual, cultural, mythology-laden, frequently delightful and not infrequently moving commentary directed?

"If *The Anathema* were not so superb a poem the matter would hardly be worth pursuing. But it is right to spend time not only with but on the text. Thus, there is the initial problem of what the poem is, and what it is about, and what it contains that we must be seized of. It is, let us say, a long, modern poem; allusive and abudant in its modern way, about - well, about mankind's history, our ancestral heritage, religion, myth and faith, and the poet's belief that man severed from his past is lost to his being, and bereft of a China lacks the very axle-tree of his existence. Then comes the question of the means by which the poem's message is fitted to its form; and third, how assimilable are both form and message to all save a small minority of those for whom the message is intended? As between poet and reader, preacher, and congregation; these seemingly simple questions are valid: 'The poet is a rememberer', says David Jones, 'it is

The rememberer

Gwyn Jones

NEIL CORCORAN

The Song of Deeds: A study of 'The Anathema' of David Jones
120pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
0 7083 0806 6

PHILIP PACEY

David Jones and other Wonder Voyagers
134pp. Poetry Wales Press, 56 Parc Avenue, Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan. £7.95.
0 90476 14

As an old-style professor of English Language and Literature (note the two elements), and a Welshman to boot, it has been my frequent privilege to read and pass judgment on doctoral theses in that field of literature the English call Welsh and the Welsh used to call English, but have now brought themselves to distinguish as "Anglo-Welsh". This means the literature produced in the English language by authors of Welsh blood, claim, or affinity. Twenty-five years ago all these theses were about Dylan Thomas; fifteen years ago they were usually about John Cowper Powys; nowadays they have homed in on the writings of David Jones. Nothing could be more natural. All three are writers of genius of near-genius; all three are or have been "difficult", and all three stand, or stood, in need of explanation.

What brings us again to the how and wherefore of communication. For what came naturally to Longland, Spenser and Milton - a long poem on an all-embracing theme of private and universal import - is today out of fashion and almost out of mind. Through these and related matters Corcoran is an informative and well-judging guide. Along with the essentials of his five chapter-heads he turns an interpreter's eye on David Jones's carefully contrived "duplicities", where an ostensibly straightforward piece of verse narrative will be found to carry a profusion of legendary, liturgical, or ironic meanings - "the larger purpose... the signs of otherness... the double vision through which all the events of *The Anathema* are viewed". He writes with insight and sympathy of the "fragmentations" of Jones's own life and the actual and metaphorical dislocations and destructions of our century which made inevitable the "fragments" and "wedges of stuff" of Jones's shorter pieces and the "fragments of an attempted writing" of *The Anathema*.

David Jones and other Wonder Voyagers, as its title announces, makes a less rigorous approach to the poet. It consists of two halves, the first, "A Man Detailed", treating mainly of David Jones; the second, "Wonder Voyagers", gives a fair amount of attention to Hugh MacDiarmid, and thereafter to George Mackay Brown and "Five English Poets in search of the Grail", meaning David Jones, Basil Bunting, John Heath-Stubbs, Geoffrey Hill and Jeremy Hooker. These last are a real fistful for one not overlong essay, and each poet could do with a more extended mention than he gets, but Philip Pacey has a gift of phrase and a civilized regard for the values of art which make for pleasant reading. "Why David Jones is Not a Household Name" was delivered as a lecture at the National Museum of Wales, and other of these essays have the agreeable sound of a well-informed man talking to a congenial audience. But taken together the collection has something of the air of a sighting-shot, a "Prolegomena to..." rather than a planned and finished thing. Whereas planned and finished is very much the impression given by *The Song of Deeds*.

There are other, much less publicized aspects of the Chinese, those who have lived among them and recognize in this book. There is a disposition, for instance, among the people to whom compromise is the essence of social order, but also an experience of personal fixation. The Chinese are very moderate in their drinking habits, have a capacity to tolerate surrounding noise, are patient towards authority, are skilled in gambling, fortune-telling and astrology - these last not necessarily stamped out by Mao's puritanism and dedication to revolution.

Not all Duncan's reflections on this country with so enduring a past have led him to revise his assumptions about Communist conspiracy. The Chinese expansionism, Spence's passing remarks are jarring. Mao's "collaborator" Ho Chi Minh, one of the Indonesian Communist Party's coup of 1965, or the Vietnamese liberation to Malaysia (in the 1970s) - but these are tatty asides that blur the more rewarding perceptions of Chinese behaviour and sentimentality give his book its value.

Conflict in the valleys

Kenneth O. Morgan

DAVID SMITH

Lewis Jones
91pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. £2.95.
0 7083 0830 9

MOIRA DEARNLEY

Marglad Evans
81pp. Cardiff: University of Wales Press. £2.95.
0 7083 0820 1

Ever since Caradoc Evans "came in like a bad smell through the windows" (to quote Gwyn Jones), the so-called Anglo-Welsh tradition has powerfully enriched our literature, both poetry and prose. Discussion of its major figures has been a central theme of the excellent University of Wales Press series, "Writers of Wales", which, since 1970, has covered writers in both Welsh and English, and has ranged from the bard Aneurin in the earliest Celtic mists down to Raymond Williams in our own time. Two attractive and welcome new additions to the series reflect, in their contrasting ways, important features of this continuing literary renaissance.

David Smith writes of Lewis Jones, agitator and folk-novelist, extraordinary, whose two novels, *Cynwaryd* and *We Live* (the latter published posthumously), lit up the literary scene in the later 1930s and whose incandescent life of rebellion spluttered out in January 1939 in his forty-second year. Lewis Jones was both a charismatic propagandist and a distinguished writer; David Smith, a professional Welsh historian with a rare gift for literary analysis, is excellent on both aspects. He sketches Jones's involvement in the upsurge of the Rhondda workers from the Tonypandy troubles in 1910 down to the hunger marches and the civil war in Spain. Here was a symbolic, almost mythical, figure of protest - lodge chairman in the Cynch Vale collieries at the age of twenty; student at the Marxist Central Labour College; spearhead of hunger marches and demonstrations by the unemployed in the years after the General Strike; Communist county councillor; recruit for the International Brigade. But what marked out Lewis Jones from other, similar working-class leaders was his genius as a self-taught chronicler of the sufferings of the South Wales miners in the inter-war period. On the suggestion of Arthur Horner (who felt that only through imaginative literature could "the full meaning of life to the Welsh mining areas" be fully conveyed), Lewis Jones traced the appalling record of industrial conflict, from the pre-war "unrest" down to the time of the Popular Front, in two remarkable novels. His writing drew its inspiration from the intense class experience of the mining community and the collective impact of the many-sided social

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Charles Tomlinson

The Mirror in the Roadway

Nature here is the multiplicity of luck such as furniture in the street when a mirror hoisting the image of a stopped truck on to a dresser top encloses its mass: the glass square bevelled at the lip: the mirror has sheered away all save the rear view - a cargo of chairs, a place to be inserted elsewhere in the jigsaw as the truck moves off and leaves this high fragment of deserted space for the street to stare into and where the mirror had hung people it with the reflections of passer-by.

Over-boiling the small fish

Richard Harris

DENNIS DUNCANSON

Changing Qualities of Chinese Life
120pp. Macmillan. £17.50.
0 333 30682 1

The quality of life, both economic and political, has changed enormously for those four per cent of Chinese living outside the pale of the Communist mainland as well as for the hundreds of millions swept up into Mao's "new" China in 1949. The overseas Chinese were then losing their protected colonial status and have since become downgraded citizens of new nation states. Hongkong's Chinese - not strictly "overseas" by their own or Peking's reckoning - have lived to a grand hotel under British management, a hotel that has had to take in waves of refugees of immigrants, most of them escaping poverty rather than oppression. In Taiwan, a Chinese population that had been ruled by Japan for half a century has found its fortunes transformed as a pivot in the world's most phenomenal arc of economic success, that runs from Seoul to Singapore.

The discrepancy in numbers between the outsiders and those enduring revolutionary turmoil inside China does not invalidate the comparison that Dennis Duncanson considers, or make it any less valuable subject. After the war Duncanson had gone to China as a language student, to be followed by government service in Malaysia, Singapore,

Hongkong and Vietnam. He visited Peking in his student days but his unceasing anti-Communist opinions would have barred him as a visitor when he returned to an academic appointment to Britain in 1969. Ten years after that, as one of a party of tourists, he was able to revisit the mainland as well as countries familiar from his earlier career talks commissioned by the BBC from that journey are expanded in this book.

Obviously the quality of life in measurable terms of food, housing and employment was heavily in favour of the outsiders, though against this must be set the occasional brutal attacks and severe discrimination that the Chinese have suffered in Indonesia and Malaysia. But what else can be said of those living under one government in the vast political unit in the world? Since the time of Hannibal - as Duncanson pertinently reminds the reader? Governing big states, a Chinese sage remarked, must no more be overdone than boiling small fish. Undoubtedly the Chinese in 1979 were grateful to have been taken off the Maoist revolutionary boil. For thirty years they had suffered the overbearing intrusion of government into their lives, the bawling loudspeakers, the compulsory political study, the damning class and political labels, the unavoidable turnout for constant ideological demonstrations. The fish were boiled dry.

There is little reason to think that such suffering had also changed deep-seated attitudes of a kind that Duncanson had observed plainly enough among the Chinese outside. To them government was alien and to be

avoided; participation in politics was inherently unwise and not even easily understood; from this it followed that democracy, human rights, personal political choice, were as much foreign to the Chinese outside as they were to the unfrocked millions within the People's Republic. Even the Communist system imposed on China in 1949 in no sense amounted to a deprivation of rights conceded by previous régimes, as Duncanson admits.

Apart from the material differences, there are aspects of society and politics that now differ somewhat among the outsiders from those of the insiders. But the total effect of Duncanson's impressions is one of similarities. The Chinese remain Chinese, and that means that the awareness of cultural identity which has always kept alive their unity has transcended different political circumstances. The quality of Chineseness is a much cultivated one - though one wonders how long this will be true of the hybrid, now largely English-speaking Chinese of Singapore.

What is also true, and may now be more relevant as the mainland opens its doors to the outside world, is the much greater contact and experience that outsiders have had with the world, thanks to economic expansion. So, too, Deng Xiaoping's new deal, which had just got into gear when Duncanson was there early in 1979, makes for closer understanding and contact. In their different circumstances Taiwan, Hongkong and the south-east Asian Chinese will all be drawn into greater exchanges. Not so the Western democracies, who will find China perhaps

less stridently dogmatic now but no less traditionally authoritarian in its assumptions about the role of the state. It is indeed an alien society, slow to change.

Take the all-pervasive role of cadres, for a start. How can they tick the traces of the mandarins of the past? Indeed, was not Liu Shaoqi's *How to be a Good Communist* - condemned by Mao, but now handsomely republished and praised - a direct echo of the precepts that inspired the mandarins, even precisely in the idea of self-cultivation, as the Chinese title of Liu's text has it? The answer, surely, underlies the conflict between Liu, the natural inheritor of Chinese traditions in example and exhortation, and Mao, with his blind conviction in revolutionary methods, unable to perceive how culture China needed different attitudes from those appropriate to guerrilla warfare, and ending in a megalomaniac seeking to determine the centuries ahead.

No less persistent in the new China has been the Confucian assumption that society was the unit that mattered and that the individual could flourish only in the social context. Where Mao's China bore heavily on the whole population, as Imperial government never did, was in its demand for reiterated support for doctrine as Mao defined it. In the old China the authoritarian context of the family required of the adolescent to "bury in his stomach" any personal opinions. Have the unremitting pressures of Maoist rule on the Chinese, who are only too easily dragged into marching in step, verbally, asks Duncanson, conditioned them to the

Before, now and after

Stuart Sutherland

ELLIOTT JAKUES

The Form of Time
238pp. Heinemann. £12.50.
0 8448 1394 X
Free Enterprise, Fair Employment
137pp. Heinemann. £9.50.
0 8448 1417 Z

Elliott Jaques, who is best known for his studies of work, has had a varied career: apart from having been trained both as a psychologist and a psychoanalyst (an unusual combination), he has been a management consultant and a doctor, and is now a professor of sociology. As befits such a polymath, his two recent books are as different as they could be. One is a metaphysical essay that attempts to provide a new conceptualization of time, while the other suggests a practical solution to the relations between man and management, and a cure to all other economic ills, including inflation and unemployment. The former book is vague, badly argued, obscure and unbecomingly repetitious, whereas the latter is for the most part precise, well argued, clear and terse. The books have in common a concern for human welfare, a passionate naïveté, and a reluctance to consider alternative points of view.

In discussing *The Form of Time*, it is simplest to start with its conclusions, since the means by which they are reached are obscure. Jaques conceives of physical time as undimensional and containing points that are related to one another by being before or after, but he claims that man's subjective concept of time is or should be (it is unclear which) two-dimensional. Following Freud, he arbitrarily divides the mind into the "conscious", "preconscious" and "unconscious", which are respectively the seats of perception, memory and desire. The conscious mind perceives moments of time occurring in succession, but for it time does not have a direction and there is no future. The main reasons given for this curious view are that one cannot refer to events in the future since they do not exist, and that the conscious mind can only perceive the present. The flow of time from future to present to past is the second axis along which time is conceptualized: this axis is perceived by the preconscious and the unconscious working. It is not clear to what extent with the conscious mind. The preconscious and the unconscious are needed for the perception of temporal flow because, according to Jaques, it requires memory and intention or desire. One can only grasp the future by forming a plan to execute a desire.

To examine these ideas, it is hard to know where to begin. Jaques states that the two kinds of time are in a

Cartesian space and are at right angles to one another, but this statement makes no sense unless it is possible to perform geometrical operations on the resulting two-dimensional space. No such operations are suggested. Moreover, it is unclear why one's present interaction with the future should depend on desires. It could depend equally on fears or merely on expectations: one can expect a future event to occur about which one's feelings are wholly neutral. Some of Jaques's problems seem to arise because he does not use the concept of representation. The conscious mind can represent the future as an expectation and the past as a memory (recovered from the preconscious): both expectations and memories are forms of representation.

Jaques claims that "there can be no spontaneous conscious knowledge of a memory-perception-desire, or a past-present-future, altogether as a unified phenomenon, as a field of force", but no amount of rhetoric can conceal the fact that we can be consciously aware of the passage of time, as reading Jaques's book demonstrates only too well. The notion of "a mental field of force" is highly nostalgic and takes one back to Kurt Lewin and the Gestalt psychologists who flourished in the 1930s. For Jaques, however, time appears to have stood still, since his book contains almost no references to work in experimental psychology after the Second World War. He can even write "My view of protomental unconscious sensing processes as a central feature of reasoning and rationality is, of course, not a very common one." Psychologists disagree about many things, but all would agree that every conscious activity — perception, memory, learning, emotion and the use of language — depends upon a multitude of unconscious processes and that many of these processes use tacit knowledge. Any speaker of English has unconsciously learned and unconsciously employs a vast number of grammatical rules to none of which, unless he is a linguist, does he have conscious access.

The value of a theory depends upon the use to which it can be put. In fact, Jaques does not even attempt to show that his "SD (3 + 2)" conception of space-time throws any light on human thought or behaviour. He does not even consider how the processes involved in fulfilling a desire can be explained. Instead, he turns in the latter half of his book to a discussion of "episodes". He claims that people differ in the length of time over which they can devise and execute a plan, and that the length over which the individual can plan follows a set path throughout his life depending on his capability. The evidence for this claim is too weak to take seriously. It is

derived from changes in salary with age in different professions and these salary changes are then related to the responsibility borne in the profession, which in turn is measured in terms of the maximum length of time over which someone at a given age must plan in the course of his work. It is surely obvious that not everyone is in a post that is exactly commensurate with his abilities.

Jaques's essay on time is obscurantist and his misuse of technical terms from mathematics (like "dual space") looks like an attempt to impress and mystify his reader. He makes too many dogmatic and unsubstantiated assertions, such as "What cannot... be built into a computer is what constitutes the decision process; namely, the nonformulated, nonexplicit, nonexplicable, unknown, nonverbalized play of unconscious forces." He is attached to multiple negatives: to adapt his own description of the preconscious, his book provides a "nonfocused, nonformed, nonsegregated, non-discrete whole type of experience which is difficult to put into words". If you like this sort of experience, this is the book for you.

Free Enterprise, Fair Employment is very different. It puts forward a solution to current economic problems which is both novel and simple. With some reservations, Jaques accepts the benefits of a free market in commodities, but he departs from classical economics in rejecting a free labour market. He argues that in such a market levels of pay will be determined largely by coercion. Regardless of the skill they exercise, workers providing a service essential to the community can secure through strikes increases in pay that do not reflect the difficulty of their job. Three undesirable effects follow. First, as one group increases its wages, others become envious and seek to increase theirs; this leads to a constant round of inflationary pay increases. Second, the practice of determining the value of labour by the coercive powers of employees and employer is degrading to the dignity of the worker. Third, there will be a tendency to use unemployment as the only known method of restricting pay increases. Jaques notes that pay freezes are unsatisfactory since they generate envy in workers who have not recently had an increase towards those who have, and that tying pay to productivity increases in inequity, since it is "a euphemism for the disruptive procedure of buying-out restrictive practices and paying bonuses to bribe people to do a fair day's work". Workers stand to gain by productivity increases, but the inverse ratio to their former efficiency.

Jaques's solution to the problem of wages and salaries is radical and

depends on an observation of his own which has been confirmed by others in both Britain and the USA. He measured the longest time over which workers were required to execute a plan in the course of their job ("time-span"); for example, a lathe operator would have a time-span of three days if he was turning metal components from drawings in batches that were checked every three days, while a journalist whose longest assignment was four months would have a time-span of four months. Jaques also asked the workers what they regarded as a fair rate of pay, and discovered that there was a high correlation between "time-span" and "felt-fair pay". Employees with the same time-span give approximately the same rate of pay as being fair for the job, even when they are in completely different occupations. Jaques also claims that he has evidence for seven basic brackets in time-span ranging from between one day and three months up to between twenty and fifty months, but since his proposals do not depend crucially on the precise number or size of these brackets, there is no need to discuss this dubious finding.

Jaques's main proposal is that all jobs should be assessed for their time-span, and remuneration should be directly governed by the time-span of the job. Within a given bracket, employees could move up through the range of wages or salaries allocated to that bracket according to such criteria as length of service or efficiency at doing the job. The payments to be made within each bracket would be decided by the government on a yearly basis after public discussion. The self-employed would continue to earn what the market for their labour or investments would provide.

Jaques's proposal is ingenious and could hardly fail to provide a fairer system of pay than that determined by present practice. There are, however, problems which he fails to note. First, although it may be true that individuals in jobs of the same time-span have the same felt-fair pay, this does not mean that they will agree on the relative pay that is fair for other workers with different time-spans or even with the same. Hence, the imposition of this system would be unlikely to remove all envy, though it might decrease it. Second, there would be many special cases of workers in a short time-span job whose work was particularly dangerous or unpleasant; like miners or North Sea divers, who would justifiably feel that they deserved remuneration above that commensurate with the time-span of their work. Third, it is impossible not to feel some scepticism about the accuracy of the procedures for determining time-span. Although the correlations between time-span and felt-fair pay obtained by Jaques and other investigators are reassuringly high, they presumably

know the job a person was performing and may have been influenced by estimates of time-span by the changing prestige of the job. Fourth, Jaques proposes that the system should be operated under full employment, but additional money could not be paid for jobs in which labour is scarce, it is hard to see how labour could be recruited for such jobs. The chronic shortage of computer programmers and systems programmers in Britain is slowly being solved by paying large salaries often to poorly qualified applicants.

Jaques points out that if his proposal were adopted, although strikes over pay would be eliminated, disputes between managers and workers might still arise over redundancy or changes in working methods. Jaques would solve these problems by means of a negotiating committee with representatives from all levels at the time: no change could be introduced without unanimous agreement between all the members. Although he sensibly remarks that "What most people fail to see is that once the strike has covered all-round agreement must certainly be discovered by some means before work can be resumed", he fails to note that the existence of a strike provides a great impetus to both workers and management to reach agreement and that without some such impetus it might be very difficult to obtain unanimous agreement on a proposed change. Of more importance, he argues that a fair wage policy would make possible full employment without the danger of inflation. Jaques thinks employment should be a constitutional right and sensibly remarks "There is always enough work in any nation to occupy all its people fully". He scorns the idea that computers and robots will produce unemployment and points out that they should free people to do what only people can do, for example, help one another by means of work in social service. If the force of the commodity market failed to provide full employment, he would have the government create enterprises both public and private to absorb the unemployed.

Despite their novelty, there is a ring of common sense about Jaques's views and for that reason alone they will doubtless find short shrift with those economists whose professional existence depends on bamboozling the nation with obfuscation. Apart from their clarity, the main obstacle to accepting Jaques's proposals is that they have a Utopian feel. Surely, the solution to our economic problems could not be so simple? Or could it? Unfortunately we shall never know since the massive conservatism of unions, employers and politicians of all parties makes it unlikely that Jaques's proposals will ever be tested in practice.

French It is *ronron*, which every schoolchild learns to the delightful song "Il était une bergère, et ronron, petit patapon...". To my ear, the Italian *ronfio* is almost operatic, while the German *Schmurreh* sounds like Wagnerian, and the Spanish *ronron* is an eternal summer siesta. But even these lovely vocalizations have been analysed and documented, in the nineteenth century, by the wit and historian Michelet, and later, during the Second World War, by an American, Mildred Meek.

We are told where Edward Lear's cat Foss is buried at San Remo, Louis Wain's cat pictures are lovingly described. There is a translation of the "The Naming of Cats", and the original of those in the musical *Cats* is added. In Japan the shambles is covered with cat-skin (soke-skin in Okinawa). Perhaps that is why, at first, reminds the westerner of catwalking. He might also have noted that in Japan, cats do not say "mrow", but "ow", which seems much more cat-like. Our English "purr" has many charming equivalents in other languages. In

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A commitment to cities

Valerie Pearl

H. J. DYOS

Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in urban history
Edited by David Cannadine and David Reeder
238pp. Cambridge University Press.
£20 (paperback, £7.50).
0 521 24624 5

DAVID CANNADINE (Editor)
Patricians, Power and Politics in Nineteenth-century Towns
227pp. Leicester University Press.
£16.50.
0 7185 1193 X

David Cannadine asks a pertinent question in a thoughtful article on the life of H. J. Dyos (in whose memory he and David Reeder have edited *Exploring the Urban Past*, a collection of twelve essays published by Dyos between 1953 and 1976): Why has urban history experienced "some loss of a sense of direction" in the past few years? He answers this question by expressing something more than a routine tribute to a leading historian. "Since Jim Dyos's death in 1978", Cannadine writes, "there has been no one equipped either as a personality or as a professor to inherit or lead the historical sub-discipline which was his personal creation." Cannadine is not alone in his view. Even during Dyos's lifetime, the "Dyos phenomenon" was recognized by one historian who described him as "midwife to an emergent branch of history, a complex phenomenon of entrepreneurship and guru-ship". Not only is the leader gone, we are told that the field of study he created is so reduced by his death that its very future is threatened. Cannadine fears that "thus, weakened

Municipal manoeuvres

P. J. Waller

JOHN GARRARD
Leadership and Power in Victorian Industrial Towns 1830-80
228pp. Manchester University Press.
£21.
0 7190 0897 2

Here is an important book whose findings and argument will find a place in any future account of early and mid-Victorian urban politics. Students of local government in our own day, too, will be forced to reconsider the adequacy of their concepts and methods in the light of the work. For it is with the tools of political science that John Garrard begins and ends his book. In particular he is concerned to measure the value of elitist and pluralist models of political behaviour. He is also keen to test modern historians' assumptions that early nineteenth-century industrial towns exhibited many of the forms of a established rural order, a deferential community in which employment acted as an urban squararchy and drew natural support from dependents who recognized common, not conflicting interests.

None of these arguments is deemed wild in the three settings Dr Garrard describes: municipal politics in early and mid-Victorian Rochdale, Bolton and Salford, where the configuration of power was far too complicated to allow interpretation by these theses. While there was, too, surprisingly, a correlation between social and economic standing and political office in these towns, each exhibited open features largely absent in the countryside, and political office could derive from it. But it was in policy-making and policy-making that the power of the elites was "most conspicuous". Garrard's need to reckon with interests both internal and external to their towns. The latter aspect, the world beyond the municipal boundaries, is an unusual feature, well drawn by Garrard in a final chapter, which argues that

Garrard's account of Ashworth's role in its organizational zeal and coherence, there is a danger that a subject which has previously thrived on the complementary attribute of intellectual tolerance may become so diffuse and amorphous as to lose any real sense of identity".

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Garrard's account of Ashworth's role

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of the social classes which they permitted to populate the newly developed towns, took what was almost universally accepted as their rightful and decorative places at the head of local society, and controlled the embryonic forms of local government.

Such urban domination, and augmentation of wealth and power, inevitably strengthened the position of the landed elite in national affairs. Even at the end of the nineteenth century the status of the landowners in local, as in national affairs, was considerable; as the editor notes, "in the short term there was increased scope for rural, patrician influence on most aspects of urban, industrial life". But as these case studies show, "power was gradually eroded as the towns grew in size and as the middle class elites of the landed elite, wealthy and united" (as it may be added finally, in the industrial towns as independent working-class movement emerged).

In his introduction Cannadine warns against the danger of writing with hindsight the history of urban and landed Britain in the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century. Only in the last quarter was there a quantitative weakening and fragmentation of the old landed order. The warning might also serve to show the danger of writing the history of towns without relating it to the complex of economic, social and political influences which helped to form urban society. The four essays have not fallen into such a trap, though whether this integration of the history of the landed interest in the development of some vastly different towns is urban history as a subject with any real sense of separate identity must remain an open question. But perhaps it does not matter what it is called. What has been achieved here is very good economic and political history.

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TRAVEL WITH
Batsford

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Purr ardua

James Kirkup

JEAN-LOUIS HUE

Le Chat dans tous ses états
228pp. Paris: Grasset. 65fr.

There seems to be no end to anthologies of cat poetry and prose, picture books, specialist guides and encyclopedias. Claire Necker's famous *Four Centuries of Cat Books* (Scarborough Press, 1972) covers 400 years of feline literature, and contains over two thousand titles of stories, essays, verse, letters, treatises, encyclopedias, art books, pedigree lists and Who's Who of the cat world.

But here is something different: a book about cats by someone who writes well, almost as well as Colette Goutier or Beatrix Potter. It is a sort of cat-sized encyclopedic written in the form of a love-song to the prince of pets. Jean-Louis Hue begins by placing the cat among the stars: "une cinquième d'étoiles, minces comme des piques, piquent sa silhouette". The neatness of that illustration well

exemplifies M Hue's touch with words. It was the astronomer Joseph Jérôme Lalande who set this thirty-fourth animal in the celestial zoo, round about 1800. It can be seen in Johann Elert Bode's *Atlas caelestis*, its tail ravaged by the minge, its claws like upholsterer's studs, its receding lower jaw giving it the look of a rodent. But Camille Flammarion in his *Les Étoiles et les Constellations* (1882) brushes it aside as of no importance, as do modern sky atlases. But, says Hue, it is still there, low in the south, on spring nights, and his vision of this heavenly creature is much more glamorous than Bode's. "Il s'est accroché des brillants aux oreilles et autour des pattes. Une pluie de paillettes argentées son pelage. Il suspend son bond dans le vide interstellaire...". Like those animated beasts we see in the neon advertisements of cities.

The author passes lightly, with cat-like tread, among various feline references: the first peak known as "le Dent du Chat" in the Jura; cat sculptures based on drawings by Voltaire-Duc at the Château de Pierrefonds, or translated by a clown from the top of the bell tower at Ypres on

the second Sunday of May; brooding over a café in the Place du Châtelet, and in the form of countless *misticordes* at Saint-Sulpice, Diest and many other holy places. At Chenneviers-sur-Marne a cat in the form of a boot-scraper stands outside a restaurant. We meet the mummified Egyptian cat of the British Museum, and cat motifs in furniture, as well as the cat's fondness for tops of cupboards, library shelves, bedside drawers, boxes

commentary

Transformation music

Michael Tanner

WAGNER

Parsifal
Lumière Cinema

Hans Jürgen Syberberg's *Parsifal* film is a masterpiece, but of an extraordinary, perhaps unique kind. It is, like Wagner's music-drama, ambivalent and opaque in sufficiently numerous and alarming respects for its greatness to be easily overlooked, and very difficult to convey. Syberberg is ambivalent towards Wagner's work itself, towards its creator, towards the relationship between both and subsequent German history, and towards the whole Western tradition of which *Parsifal* is a late and bizarre manifestation. It is possible to see Wagner's work either as the consummate artistic achievement of the modern era, or, as Nietzsche thought, the *opus ultimum* of decadence. Syberberg sees it both ways, and presents them simultaneously. But he is himself not a decadent, and so does not relish the torn reactions which Wagner produces in him. His film has the aspect of an anguished pilgrimage, undertaken in the hope that in coming to terms with Wagner he will eventually find that after all the probing, parody and manifestations of downright hostility, *Parsifal* will turn out to be ennobling, true and beautiful, capable of incorporating the most dissonant and disparate elements into something that validates that tradition which it virtually concludes. He subjects it to unthinkable distortions, amazing juxtapositions and simultaneously contradictory significances, together with constant reminders of the hideous interpretations to which it has seemingly lent itself. It often seems as if he is challenging it to survive the most savage manhandling he can administer.

In all this drastic and brutal treatment it must be stressed that he is working in a totally different way from Patrice Chéreau in his *Ring*. Chéreau eliminated innumerable actual elements in the *Ring*, including many of the most important, in order to produce a merely polished work; he knows nothing of myth, of ambiguities, or even of mixed feelings. Syberberg, often seems, knows of nothing else. He doesn't even allow the work to get under way until he has had a warning-up sequence of rehearsal, with many a disorientating image of civilization in collapse; and after the final chord of Wagner's work there is a short period of darkness in which we hear Kundry's words from the First Act immediately before the Transformation Music: "Schlafen... schlafen... ich muss". One is left to speculate whether it is Wagner who has to sleep, after what he has been subjected to by the audience, to recover from such a bewildering over-input of visual information; or more likely Syberberg himself, after his supreme effort to settle his account with the cultural figure who has haunted all his work.

Musically speaking, once the Prelude has begun, we are presented with a fine but not a great performance of Wagner's score. Armin Jordan's account is noble, spacious. The singers are all at least adequate, and mostly more than that. If it lacks the supreme power of Karl Muck or Hans Knappertsbusch, that is appropriate. Two of the singers also do. Age Haugland is a brilliantly repulsive Klingor, obnoxiously malign. Robert Lloyd is a youthful Grinheimar throughout, but sings with unfailing nobility and with a subtle simplicity that reminds one constantly of Hans Hotter. Reiner Goldberg is a gloriously free and heroic Parsifal, the best on record, and his voice is therefore distant in the impression it makes from either of the two actors of the part, the extremely youthful Michael Küller and the slightly older Karin Kriek. This distance makes the most notorious feature of the film—the replacement of a male by a female actor of Parsifal after Kundry's kiss in

Act II—easier to take. Not that it is free of puzzling aspects; for if Parsifal is to be androgynous, one would have expected the reverse sequence. The torments of lust that he (she) feels after the kiss, and successfully conquers, would seem to demand a transformation into adult male sexuality. Nothing that Syberberg does in the film, or writes in his book *Parsifal*, Elin Fikse (28pp, Munich: Wilhelm Fikse, DM 12.90, 3 453 01626 2) justifies this perversion. This is perhaps his central bone of contention with this specific aspect of

Wagner and Syberberg are simultaneously artists of powerful intuitions and overwhelming intelligence. The difference is that in Syberberg the intellectual is often incorporated in the film, whereas Wagner almost never lapses into the didactic or speculative. And even when Syberberg works entirely through the superimposition of images, the fact that they are often at odds with one another means that the alert spectator is precipitated into sometimes distracting reflection, instead of into active response. When, for instance, in



"Head of Aua-Capri Girl", 1878, from John Singer Sargent by Correr Raitchiff (25pp, with 338 illustrations, Oxford: Phaidon, £48, 0 7148 2279 5), to be reviewed in a future issue of the TLS.

Wagner's *Parsifal*. Whereas Wagner wanted his hero to retain his purity, Syberberg wants him to achieve sexual wholeness. And the penultimate image of the film, in which the two Parsifals embrace, movingly embodies that idea. Syberberg seems to be going beyond, not to say against, Wagner—indeed, he declares in his book that "it is necessary neither to serve nor to fight Wagner, but to continue with him means". The fact that some of his "confrontations" appear to be contradictions is not surprising, especially in view of the fact that both

the Grail scene in Act III, the main action is seen to take place against a background of miscellaneous Bayreuth productions of other operas besides *Parsifal*, one is forced to take time off to wonder why.

The *a priori* objections to treating Wagner, or indeed any work of art before the twentieth century, in such a way are so strong that only something that produces compensations of enormous power could overcome them. That Syberberg's film contrives to be largely due to images of

Wagnerian daring and grandeur, especially those that involve Edith Clever, the great actress who portrays Kundry and illuminates her as not even the greatest performers of the role have managed to do before. Syberberg's tussle with Wagner is indeed an epic affair, itself a fit subject for a Wagnerian work, in which a great mythologist confronts a great psychologist and historian of culture—it is as if Wagner and Nietzsche were at last having it out. Since *Parsifal* is so question-raising a work, a production that joins one into asking the central questions, which none other in my experience has done—an unfaithful production—is necessary, though it will certainly need to be seen many times before one can gauge the validity of some of Syberberg's ideas. In producing a commentary on the work, he has insured that *finally* one will want to discard his version, just as one finally wants to discard even the best annotated edition of Shakespeare and simply read the text. For however incomplete or unsatisfactory Wagner's views on, for example, the relations between the sexes, his work has its own integrity which Syberberg has violated with brilliance and persistence, and not replaced by a whole vision of his own. It noticed that whenever he seemed most at loggerheads with Wagner, the music gained in power and authority, and made Syberberg seem impertinent in both senses.

Apart from the perversities and deep questionings, there are some things that are merely silly, such as Titivell portrayed as the bloated Ludwig II, and the flight of steps in the Transformation in Act III which lead into Wagner's quilted dressing-gown enormously enlarged. As I said, it is difficult to report on the film's sound siller than anything we have had to endure before. But I hope I've conveyed too how unlike them it is—above all how *questioning* a work. Time and again the characters are seen in labyrinthine tunnels, and one is left with the sense of Wagner's undiminished, indeed heightened artistic search for the real, surrounded on all sides by the apparent and the false. To have made us feel that afresh is an astonishing achievement. Susan Sonntag is right: Syberberg is the greatest Wagnerian since Thomas Mann.

with such trappings was its repeated insistence that they were totally misleading: Coward "was none of the things he seemed"; his dapper persona was an invention heroically sustained. The man beneath that serenely impassive front was much more complicated. Given this belief, it might be expected that some effort would be made to prise the human being out of the Art Deco container. But virtually none was. For all the biographical material now available, commentary remained at the level of agog gossip and stage-struck reminiscence.

Only on the subject of Coward's homosexuality did the film go behind the scenes, and even here not very enlighteningly. There was mention of a stockbroker lover who interfered disastrously with Coward's finances. His companion for twenty-seven years spoke briefly of their life together, remarking that, though Coward was jealous in personal matters, he was not in professional ones (a claim scarcely supported by a later scene from *Present Laughter* where a silk-dressing-gowned Donald Sinden bayed abuse at a crucified creature, all college-sear, spectacles and elbow-patches, representing newer playwrights). To ensure respectability, it seems, Coward had to pose as a "heterosexual and" film of him entangled in celluloid courtship or casting a resignedly cocked eye over a march-past of Polkestone bathing beauties showed this facade being mantled kept up. Typically, though, the effect of such suppression on his work was left unexplored. Yet, being reined in, a

what distinguishes a great deal of Coward's writing, *Brief Encounter*, that clenched classic, in about emotion which, breaching convention, must not be expressed but repressed. In the comedies, and the invariably associated with poise. The little, brittle sentences—often deceptively declarative: "I loathe... I adore... I can't bear... I conceal more than I can bear... Ostentation becomes disguise. Assurance is luridly rocked off balance in a piece of Mayfair melodrama like *The Vortex*. The successful comedies, *Hay Fever* or *Private Lives* unleash farcical disorder, then sardonically relish the discomfiture of those too gauche to cope with it.

In *A Private Life*, Coward's theatrical career was chronicled—neon lights flashed the titles of his plays as cuttings from good or bad reviews flickered past—but his works themselves were never examined: so the programme's few critical claims, as that *Hay Fever* is "the major comedy of England in the twentieth century" were left without visible means of intellectual support. Never getting inside the bow-tied packaging, the film conveyed neither the character of Coward's work nor the personality of

Memorabilia

Richard Combs

Aspern

Academy Cinema

The author of *The Aspern Papers* might have appreciated the irony of his story being adapted by a film-maker who temperamentally has little in common with him, but who is eminently qualified by the fact that he has already made a variation on the same story. Eduardo de Gregorio, an Argentinian working in Paris, has scripted films for Bernardo Bertolucci and Jacques Rivette, and in his own first film as a director, *Sénil*, experimented with self-conscious story-telling with Jamesian echoes. In that film an English writer in France (Corin Redgrave), looking for a property in which to invest his earnings, penetrates a crumbling old mansion inhabited by a manipulative housekeeper (Leslie Caron) and two mysterious young ladies, who might not be actresses, and who eventually leave him stranded with his sexual fantasies, the misadventures of property, and a crippling wheel block.

The shade of difference is that *Sénil* is teasing about the properties of literature (or fiction-making in general). *The Aspern Papers* is about something more concrete, a literary property. Although it revolves round the question of how far life should be exploited in the service of art, James's story is not concerned with the properties of fiction as such. Equally de Gregorio—and here one comes to the temperamental difference—is not interested in the Jamesian density of character and feeling; his work is blander, quite modernist, a psychological lone. The result is a curiosity: a film which (apart from its updating and relocating from Venice to nocturnal Lisbon) has stuck closely to James's characters, situations and dialogue, but which—the above Aspern papers aside—doesn't seem to have found what it is looking for.

Part of what is missing is suggested by the décor: de Gregorio treats the rambling old villa—where the poet Jeffrey Aspern's incredibly aged mistress (Alida Valli) and her treacherous niece (Bulle Ogilvie) live their secret—no precise architectural labyrinth, again true to James, but without the Gothic aura of the book. The abode in *Sénil*, which might be harbouring alternative fictions. But this is a comparative lack, and in other respects *Aspern* has deeply made over the original. It is only by degrees that James impugns the motives of his being, suggesting that his disinterested art of literary archaeology, in invading the lives of the two ladies, might have led him to a kind of emotional compromise as he leads them on. Nearly 100 years distant from James, de Gregorio's film is necessarily more cynical both about the art of fiction and the people who practise (or research, critique, or write) it. Here, Jean Desautels (Jean Sorel) is not only an editor but a writer with a reputation to maintain—or to salvage: the review seen to have collected of stories seen to have damned him by comparison with his old lady's memorabilia are those which leads a nice turn of the screw in his final dilemma of whether he is prepared to marry the scatty niece in order to get his hands on the papers of one scene, where Deaux and his girlfriend (a revamping of his own colleague from the story), are speculating about how Aspern and his now venerable mistress might have met, these figments from the past materialize as shadows embracing on the wall. For a moment other possibilities flash in de Gregorio's head, as he to complete the scenes of which shadows are a relic, and which would have amounted to a real liberty taken with James: scenes featuring Jeffrey Aspern himself, getting out of the biographer's hypotheses.

The sweetness of age

Stanley Wells

SHAKESPEARE

King Lear
Chanel 4

Michael Elliott's sensitive production of *King Lear* for Laurence Olivier does not claim an intellectual exploration of the text such as is associated with the concept of director's theatre. It seeks rather to provide a framework in which the actors' energies may be fully released in the portrayal of individual characters. Roy Stonehouse's setting is in the pictorial tradition deriving from the nineteenth century. Though it is studio-based, it uses turf, sand, a stream, an oak tree, animals—horses, dogs, hens, a rabbit, a mouse, even butterflies—and washings of studio rain. Tanya Molschewich's costumes are Ancient British; the action begins and ends in misty weather at Stonehenge. Irving and Wolff would have been at home in this setting; the most recent theatre production that it recalls is Glen Byam Shaw's, for Charles Laughton at Stratford in 1959—the season in which Olivier gave his magnificent Coriolanus.

This is the right mode for a production clearly designed to enable Olivier, who has not been fit enough to appear on the stage for some years, and who has not acted in Shakespeare since 1974, to play Lear for the first time since 1946. Inevitably, the focus of interest is on his performance, though a very strong supporting cast has been assembled. Jeremy Kemp is a blearsy, sinister Cornwall, Anna Calder Marshall a touching Cordelia. Dorothy Tutin and Diana Rigg nicely differentiate the wicked sisters, the former authoritatively, the latter hard-boiled, the latter a sweetly smiling, eminently reasonable villainess. John Hurt is not permitted to develop much individually as the Fool, and Robert Lindsay is a bland Edmund, but David Edgar, Colin Blakely, and Leo McKern pass from character to character with powerful suffering as Gloucester.

The Lear who is at the centre of the composition is a white-haired, white-bearded, pink-cheeked old man who touches our hearts from the moment when, following upon all the other members of the court, he enters supported by Cordelia in a warm embrace. He realises the love-contest that he imposes on his daughters; it's a bit of a game for him, though he insists that Cordelia kiss the ground before she begins to speak. His affectionate commitment to Cordelia is evident. When she declares she can say nothing to compete with her sisters, he cups his hand playfully to his ear, indulgently asking her to "speak again" as if sure she must be playing a game he doesn't quite understand. In "Mend your speech a little / Let you may mar my fortunes", the second clause is given confidentially, as if he were still childish, that she can mean what she says. When it becomes clear that she does not react with pain rather than anger, the old man seems foolishly reasonable in his attitude; and he has immense charm: a quality not often associated with Lear, but which gains our sympathetic indulgence from the fact.

Lear's charm is again apparent in the lightly humorous handling of the conversation—Lear on horseback with the disguised Kent; he feeds his horse with lumps of sugar, and is so obviously not to be a Lear who is growing self-reliant will show himself in better behaviour to his dependent than he is already pathetic, weary even in prayer. On "O let me be mad, not to know what I have done, but to feel that I have done it", Lear's scene with Cordelia is a brilliant display of emotional intelligence, relieved by a great outburst of "O 3 'Only the scholar will remember my

the astonishing vocal inventiveness showing itself in the polysyllabic "errors of the earth".

As usual, textual cuts are made, particularly in the later acts, some justified by the Folio; others not. For while Gloucester occupies the centre of attention, the blinding scene not shirked, Dover Cliff ingeniously scrubbed out so that he falls from a sand. The naturalism of setting is brilliantly clinched on Lear's reappearance. He has, it seems, been living in a Crusoe-like state of nature. We see him washing in a stream, then taking a rabbit from a snare, gutting it, and gratefully gobbling the innards. He crowns himself with chains of flowers; there is a kind of self-contentment, a new-found serenity in his madness. His suffering now is retrospective, not actual, though his gentleness with Gloucester contrasts with the passionate intensity of his repudiation of female sexuality and of the hypocrisy of the "rascal heeler". He cradles Gloucester's head in loving compassion, and his offer "take my eyes" has climactic force. This great scene, which rarely fails, succeeds triumphantly here.

In the closing scenes Lear looks older; the white hair is more silky, the beard is shaven, the skin almost transparent. His expression is ineffably benign; the charm has deepened into sweetness. A rare lapse in direction fails to lead satisfactorily into Lear's entry with the hanged Cordelia on "Howl, howl, howl!" but the final episode is beautifully handled. Like Othello, this Lear dies upon a kiss; there is something celebratory about his concern for Cordelia—as if he rejoiced in his love for her even while grieving over her death.

Olivier's voice is occasionally hoarse, and there are a few fluffs. He may have given a more commanding performance in 1946, but can still have given a more touching one. It is good that he has been given this late chance to demonstrate, to a new generation and in a new medium, his technical and interpretative genius in a great Shakespearean role.

Author, Author

Competition No 117

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send in the answers so that the results may be published in May 6. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.

Entries, marked "Author, Author 117" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, 25 John's Lane, London EC4M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on May 13.

1 Here, traveller, scholar, poet, take your stand
When all those rooms and passages are gone,
When nettles wave upon a shapeless mound
And saplings root among the broken stone,
And dedicate—eyes bent upon the ground—
Back turned upon the brightness of the sun

And all the sensuality of the shade—
A moment's memory to that jaunted head

2 Their ghosts are gagged, their books
Are library flotsam,
Some of their names—not all—
But, life being short, we rarely read their poems.

More source-books now to point or
Except a rite,
While those opinions which rank high
Are based on

On a wish to be different or on lack of taste,
Only the scholar will remember my

Recuperations

Robert Hewison

Conference of the Association of Art Historians
Institute of Education, London

Half-way through its ninth annual conference the Association of Art Historians turned to the contemplation of its past. Four discussion sessions were scheduled for Sunday afternoon, to provide for wider debate on larger issues than those raised in the seventy odd specialist research papers also presented. Two of the discussion topics chosen gave special opportunities for self-contemplation: "The future shape of AAH Conferences" and "Methodology".

The debate on this latter issue formed the true centre of the conference, and the passions it aroused indicate that all is not well beneath the Association's traditionally Olympian omphalos. Art history, like other academic disciplines in the humanities, is suffering from indignation, as it tries to absorb the new approaches to its subject matter developed by those interested in Marxism, linguistics and psychoanalytic theory.

The four invited speakers in the discussion on methodology were billed as having "widely differing approaches", but with the exception of John House of the Courtauld Institute, who described his as "an enlightened empiricist position", the speakers held similar views both in their deference to French theoreticians and their hostility to the traditional practices of art history. Though Tom Grevton of University College London and David Mellor of Sussex University did not agree with each other on all points, both stressed the ideological implications in the practice of art history, and in the definition of what constituted "Art". Art history served to reinforce the dominant power structure in society. Mellor laid most stress on the importance for historical method of the writings of Michel Foucault, and made the most overtly political criticisms of art history. The arguments of both Grevton and Mellor

Five perfect footnotes to a patchwork text,
When, like a single-seater, I am wheeled
Into the shadow of the hanger,
Heaven is full of clocks which strike all day.
It is to music we are put away.

Competition No 113
Winner: William Beckwith
Answers:

1 All day long the figure sat there, the sunburnt enriching its costly raiment and flashing from its jewels; twilight came, and presently the stars, but still the figure remained; the moon found it there still; and framed the picture with the shadow of the window-sash, and flooded it with mellow light.

Mark Twain and C. D. Warner, *The Glazed Age*.

2 Meanwhile the twilight is glooming upward out of the corners of the room. The shadows of the tall furniture grow deeper, and at first they become more definite; then, spreading wider, they lose their distinctness of outline in the dark gray tide of oblivion, as it were, that creeps over the various objects, and the one human figure sitting in the midst of them.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*.

3 While the dogs are yet barking and howling—there is one dog howling like a demon—the church clocks, as if they were startled too, begin to strike. The din from the streets, likewise, seems to swell into a shout. But it is soon over. Before the last clock begins to strike ten, there is a lull. When it has ceased, the fine night, the bright large moon, and multitudes of stars, are left in peace again.

Charles Dickens, *Black House*.

New Oxford Books:

Religion & Philosophy

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Many people regard Hegel's work as obscure and extremely difficult to comprehend, yet his importance is universally acknowledged, and we live in an intellectual climate decisively influenced by his ideas. Professor Singer eliminates any excuse for remaining ignorant of the outlines of Hegel's philosophy by providing a broad discussion of his ideas, and an account of his major works that is both clear and concise. Paperback £1.75. *Past Masters* £7.95 paperback £1.75. *Past Masters*.

Bayle

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This is the first comprehensive study of the considerable influence of Nicholas Malebranche on British thought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After giving a substantial account of Malebranche's philosophy, Professor McCracken examines in detail his English disciples; his influence on Locke, Berkeley, Hume, and Field; and the fortunes of his ideas in colonial America. £25.

St John's Gospel

A Commentary

R. H. Lightfoot

Edited by C. F. Evans

This book, first published in hard covers in 1956, is addressed to those who wish to make a serious study of the Bible but may not have any special linguistic equipment such as a knowledge of Greek. It is primarily a religious and theological exposition of the text of St John's Gospel. Paperback £7.50.

Oxford

University Press

remainders

Eric Korn

Arthur Koestler had the quality of omnipresence. When I was growing up, whatever tempting intellectual systems threatened or enlivened the time, he had already been there, from kibbutz to condemned cell, like a precise and uncensorious physician (though the censoriousness came later), describing the pleasures and the consequences of indulgence. The world was peopled with his vivid and exemplary heroes.

I never met him, and as that hugely energetic and diverse career of his went on, agreed with him less often; but it was never possible to read him with indifference, without enthusiasm. As malignant or indifferent fate would have it, I never managed to write about my gratitude to him; on the contrary, frequently found myself reviewing books by his associates with whom I was not in sympathy. I tried to say my thanks in connection with Iain Hamilton's originally authorized, later unauthorised biography: I doubt if that helped.

We honour none but the horizontal: why not write a fan letter today to the literary idol of your choice? Don't be shy: I do not believe that the eminent object to receiving letters from total strangers provided they are couched in sufficiently flattering terms.

Not everyone honours the horizontal. The *New Statesman* (in which he frequently wrote when both stood on the humanist democratic left) signalled the death of this various and independent-minded man with a squalid piece by David Murray which ignored much of his most enduring work: the novels, the autobiography, the campaign against capital punishment. Instead, taking Koestler on his own violation of himself as a systematic metaplayer rather than a wonderfully stimulating speculative writer, it sees him as the would-be creator of a malignant obscurantist ideology, to push "the false claim that society is harmonious and organic" and so on, a closed system to replace the closed system of Marxist mechanism to which he once adhered. (His adherence was at best tactical: he was having "oceanic feelings" of a deplorably idealist nature way back in the 1930s.)

"Just the sort of system the bourgeoisie needs as it pursues a policy of retreating from the terrain of rationality," concludes Murray, in a tone faintly reminiscent of Rubashov's interrogators in *Darkness at Noon*, who see no "objective" difference between disagreeing with Party policy and plotting to poison Stalin. His

last phrase has particularly unforgettable, ingrowing-toenail, quality: "There will be many more Koestlers. Well, no there won't, and this is not only because people are not interchangeable. I'm unique, you're unique, David Murray is unique; and some people are slightly unique than others."

Like David Murray, I abominate the rise of the new occultism, and don't believe for an instant that the ill-wishes of the living or the dead can have any physical effect. Nevertheless some ill-luck has this week afflicted the *New Statesman* (for which I have the same exasperated veneration as I did for the late Arthur Koestler). Not only has their television critic freaked out and demanded the disavowal of the whole sordid medium (not, *prima facie*, such a rotten notion, I must say), but the Competition Department has been induced to part with four-pound prizes for two limericks, concerning old or young persons from respectively Siberia and Leghorn, which occur in Norman Douglas's *Some Limericks* (1,000 copies privately printed 1929; original buckram, a trifle dirty) and certainly didn't originate there. Of the one (indexed as "Siberia, monastic discipline in") Douglas gives what must be described as a rather tacky variant; of the other, which concerns a person who wished he had never been born, originating in this text not in Leghorn but Cape Horn, Douglas remarks "I should apologize for inserting this well-known lyric but for the fact that so perfect a specimen of the Golden Period cannot be excluded from a collection like this."

In a time increasingly flavoured by credulous idiots (the appearance of an astrologer on the BBC morning television show is a portent not unlike the first sighting of a party of Ostrogoths heading down the autobahn 'Romwards'), let's raise a small cheer for W. J. Thomas, patron saint of those who have no patron saints. Thomas, who invented the word "folk-lore" if not the notion, and founded *Notes and Queries*, devoted vast efforts of admirable wit-blanket to doubling the popular belief in the prevalence of very aged aged men and women. His book *The Longevity of Man* (Norgate, 1879) is three hundred odd pages of nay-saying in tones of greater or lesser exasperation. No, Henry Jenkins was not 169; no, Thomas Parr was not 152; Mary Billings was not 112 (but 91); Thomas Geeran was not 106 - and moreover did not serve with distinction for

twenty-eight years in the 71st Highlanders, seeing action at Senngapatam, Corunna and Waterloo, but, without much distinction, from March 3, 1813, to April 10 of the same year, when he deserted.

By such scepticism Thomas earned the gratitude of absolutely nobody. Not only did he refuse to accept the evidence of gravestones and stoned graves windows, even if handsomely designed, he remained unconvinced when old person's neighbours, themselves elderly, remembered said older as being hoar when they themselves were green. When persons distinctly recalled Bonnockum or Blenheim or the fell winter of 1801, he would ask them civilly whether they were not by chance thinking of Inkerman or Alma or the dire December of 1850. Even if they produced registers, showing the baptism of one V. Oldbody at St Methusalem in 1699, he would unreasonably demand proof that the person named was the very same who was now standing before him, sprightly for all his eight-score winters.

The indignation and condemnation of all decent folk, particularly oldest inhabitants of Londinium and supporters, can be imagined. He was constantly challenged with challenges along the lines of "In my parish/practice/manor there is an old person of 118 who distinctly recalls being 117 last year, now disprove that." And the disabbling Thomas, scaling unequal heights of curmudgeonliness, would reply that it wasn't up to him to disprove, but to the gerontophiles to prove. When he had finished lopping off the odd decade here and there, only four fully authenticated British centenarians were left, the palm (or rather the garland of bristled pine) going to William Luning, 103.

My copy belonged to the author's grandson, according to an inscription, but it appears that rationalism does not run in families. On page 84 (Henry Jenkins 1750-1670?) he gets out an angry pencil and shouts "not a fair statement" in the margin. "He didn't say he fought at Flodden, only that he took a cartload of arrows so far on the way and was relieved by a bigger boy. (Very different!)" and as if this were not conclusive, adds "I have a very old oil painting of H. J. They have not got one in the National Portrait Gallery. Also old engravings (4)".

All this was in 1879, well within the memory of the oldest man (Shigechiyu Izumi) but not a lot has changed. Statisticians with a thousand million records can say with some certainty that if there are so many ninety-five, ninety-six and ninety-seven-year-olds, there will be so many 102, 103, and 104-year-olds - or rather, so few. They observe that their curves have nice neat tails if they go by written records; and a little bump to the right if they go by verbal claims; they observe wryly that the average nonsensical age, according to his own report, by 17 years per annum. But the Queen continues to send me congratulatory telegrams that actuarial predictions warrant, I mean Telemessages (what does she find to say now she is allowed fifty words?), and exiled now to Huzar or Hills by Andean valleys, beyond the reach of computers and social security numbers, supercentenarians mislabeled by H3, coo, or royal jelly, live happily ever after.

Koestler makes (he hinted) a wonderful subject for the book-collector: variant titles, significant editions, elusive pamphlets and a fine batch of rarities. His first book (*Von Weissen Nachten und Röm Tegen* Kharkov, 1933) may not survive, if it ever existed. His next, *Die Rapsodie Entomologie*, is merely very difficult. *Darkness at Noon* is about as hard to find as a normally published book put out by an ordinary commercial publisher can well be: I have to make do with a cleanish first edition in a fourth impression dust-wrapper - it looks, incidentally, from November 1940 to April 1943 to reach that fourth impression. And then of course there is Professor Arthur Koestler and his sex manuals, found usually in post-war

editions which have been largely rewritten.

Publishers' errors add to the fun. Do you want the reissue of *The Ghandis* dated 1949, which appears to be a first edition, or a copy with a pasted-in slip which says "First published elsewhere, 1939/Reissued by Macmillan 1950"? (Neither or both, depending on the degree of collecting zeal or ninnia.) The French translation of *Arrival and Departure*, called *Croisade sans Croix* (Editions Penguin, 1947) gives the copyright as 1939, which would make the book, set in Lisbon in 1940, prescient as well as perspicacious. Most embarrassingly, the Left Book Club was obliged to paste over the title page of *Scum of the Earth* a slip deleting the words "translated by Daphne Hardy" and explaining that the work hadn't needed a translator because it was written in English. And of course no collection would be complete without the scurrilous pamphlet *The Philosophy of Betrayal* (Russia Today, 1945) which takes the line that Koestler was, even if only objectively, a hireling of the fascists who repeatedly jailed him and came close to killing him. Anyone who had reservations about the Soviet legal system was giving the camp of reaction and warmongery just the support it needed. There would, the authors imply, be many more Koestlers.

Readers of Auden were understandably thrown off course when, decades after writing it, he first dived from the poem "September 1939" the verse containing his best-known line ("We must love one another or die") and then abolished the poem altogether. Some people argued, absurdly, that as poets were the unacknowledged etc, if Auden said the poem was to be fired from the canon, then it didn't exist and moreover never had existed; others argued, just as absurdly, that artists had no right to interfere with their own past, and if they tried to do so, the fabric of history would be threatened, and the Time-Lords would have to step in and give everybody a good spanking.

Auden became fairly cross about the whole matter, and who wouldn't, but I'm just wondering whether some of the distaste for the poem was laid down as early as July 1942 when it was reprinted in *Poetry in Wartime* (Faber), an anthology edited by T. S. Eliot. The version therein is a fair old landmark in textual abuse. The second verse, which begins

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offense
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad
is given an unexpected freshness and brevity, as well as an agreeable air of mystery, by omitting the words "has driven a" (Hum it to yourself, you'll like it.) Further down the same verse, "I and the public know / What all schoolchildren learn" becomes "O and the public know". "And the lie of authority" becomes "And in the lie of authority", apparently a golfing reference, and "Beleaguered by the same / Negation and despair" gets an unwelcome comma after "same".

But most remarkable is that the title is changed to "September 1941", perhaps on the ground that poetry must be seen to be contemporary, or because 1939 (9/1/39 if you prefer) was strictly speaking before the war started, or perhaps simply because the proof-reading was done by dim-sighted non-combatants, or non-Anglophone Italian POWs, or refugee Czechs constitutionally given to post-dating. I looked up September 1, 1941, in what is nearly the largest and certainly the most useless book on my shelves, *Day by Day: The Forties* by Thomas M. Leonard, "Facts on File", 1977, pp. 1,042, and found that Russian and British troops met at Stalingrad in Iran, that Wendell Willkie announced that he had been briefed by the Motion Picture Distributors of America, and President Camacho of Mexico said that all outstanding problems were soluble; truly a memorable day for mankind, but not, I think, the one Auden had in mind.

Incidentally, no one has asked me to review the memoirs, the new memoirs that is, of Cota Pearl, more exotically known as La Lune Rousse, more correctly as Crotchi, Emma Elizabeth

(1842-1886). "Having been", says the dear DNB, "misled by an elderly admirer", she made a career of accepting gifts of money and gems from elderly Parisian gentlemen, many of them of high social standing. (The change of name was obviously a sound expedient, as few aged gentlemen would admit to being infatuated with la divine Crotchi, Emma Elizabeth.)

She died operationally alone and abandoned, and her memoirs, published in the year of her death, turned out to be dull reading, which is why it is fortunate that a new set of memoirs, much less dull and written in a more outspoken fashion, should have come to light, and why persons of a cynical disposition have cast doubt on their authenticity. The bibliographic information, always more enlightening than books themselves, gives evidence of the original memoirs' stylistic failings. The Paris edition ran to 30 pages, the London editions to 180, the New York editions to 75 and 230. Evidently it was easy to have enough of Cora.

On my way to her, and not knowing enough to start at Crotchi, I explored what oyster-bed of pearls: Orson Merrill Pearl, co-editor with Herbert Kayman Dozie of *Tar-zoff's* *Kourris*; Oscar J. Pearl, and is outstanding collection of Large Carat Captain N. H. Pearl, author of *How to Stay Young* (first line: "There's half-moon beam"); and Irma Pearl of *Our Yesterday's* *Australian Life* (1853 in photographs, though the last must be a merry pseudonym: "Mrs Pearl and Yurra Beauty/Irma d'Almeida Ozzie cutie").

Then there's *The Pearl* (African/Gift) and *The Pearl*, a magazine of *faciata and voluptuous reading*, which must have made life difficult for newsgatherers, if there were any, handled both, to say nothing of *the middle English poem* among various editions and recensions of one of the all-time memorabilia of the Middle English period, *De Perle* is translated by Middel-Engels oorkyyn by Nij-Frysk. Another entry is "De Perle: in visioen at Nij-Frysk, Engels oorkyyn by Nij-Frysk" but rather than believe that D. K. K. of Dokkum (for it is he) published two translations in two separate dialects, I prefer to believe that the Chicago Newbury Librarian has had a slip of the fiche.

It's marvellous to envision, in envision, all those Friesian markers and bird-watchers, a Lecuwarden and Terschelling, bowing for Middle English epics to be as accessible. As I understand it, Friesland practically is Middle English, which makes it all the more odd, or

Don't: A Manual of Middles & Improperities were or less present in a condit and with the Additional Matter. The Official Authorised & Complete Edition of the Vellum-Parchment Series of Miscellaneous Literature, just been released in facsimile (Whitstable: Pryor Publications, 0 946014 02 7). Written by C. E. English, counterpart, who was Censor, New York to be "of the better class". "Don't wear evening dress in the morning." We may take it that possessors of swallow-tails and white ties are not found, even in America, amongst mechanics. "Don't stop chapters." "At Table." "If you do, don't your knife or fork; but, if you do, pass off without comment and do not philosophise indifference." "In the mouth remigal and disreputable." "In the room to health." "In the room." "Don't start a 'Don't' furniture." "In Public." "Don't obstruct the entrance to church." "Don't be over-dill." "In Special." "Don't use the word please to a man." "In General." "Don't follow the envelope by moistening the inside with your lips." "In Affection." "Don't wear diamonds in the morning." "Don't give yourself wholly to reading of novels."

'Ulpian'

Sir, - The correspondence about *Ulpian* (March 4 and 25) reflects back on two previous books, *Tribonian* and *Emperors and Lawyers*. May I explain why taken together these three books inspire some and dismay others?

I propose new ways of reading the legal texts. "Imperial" constitutions must be read chronologically. If they are, periods of discrete style emerge, often not coincident with reigns. Each constitution must henceforth be viewed as part of the body of work done by the official who composed it, whether in the third century (Emperors) or the sixth (Tribonian). "Reserve" will be confined to those who are unwilling to read the texts in sequence.

Now for Justinian's *Digest*. Extending Bluhme's work (1820), we find that the classical texts were divided for excerpting among six commissioners. It emerges (1981 *Tijd. v. Rechtsgeach.*, 225) that they edited them rather differently. So for each *Digest* text we must now ask who the excerpter was. As to the jurists excerpted, they are not interchangeable, as was once thought. They demand individual scrutiny. *Ulpian* was the bulkiest; hence *Ulpian*.

Given the backward state of the art, rather than any merit of mine, these maxims need stressing. Taking them together, we must re-read every text and rewrite much of Roman law.

The stacks on *Ulpian* need to be seen in this light, which may partly account for their erratic stridencies. To Alan Watson (February 18) my Latin is suspect because I should realize that per contrarium quoque can be separated and quoque read with what follows. For educated people, Quintilian rules this out (*Inst.* 1.5.29). To Bruce W. Frier (Letters, March 25) it is historical fantasy for me to assert that *Ulpian* came of a family of scholars. But Syme (97 Z. Sov. Stif. 10) holds that "at first inspection and on mature thoughts" the pedantic grammarian in Athenaeus was the jurist's father. And so on, though not in your columns. The critics' fiercest wish fixes on my effort to settle the order of composition of *Ulpian*'s works, where I rely on the "bunching" of unusual phrases. The evidence is admissible, since we do pick up and

discrd phrases like fashions, but surely fragile. Can someone fix a better chronology? If he can, we shall then see whether for (as I believe) the first time, one or more of my findings in these three books is shown to be wrong. But the critics and I are at cross-purposes. For me, as for Torville and Dean, "there is no point in standing still". If obstacles are present we demolish them with whatever lies to hand. That is the hazardous but fertile route. The alternative is the old-fashioned wait: respectable but, at least in Roman law, obsolete.

TONY HONORE.
All Soula College, Oxford.

Nutrition and Health

Sir, - Mary Douglas (Letters, March 4) quotes an authority who stated in 1968 that British food tastes are conservative. But that was a long time ago and the experience of the two decades after the Second World War is even less relevant to the rapidly changing situation of the 1970s and 1980s. The mould of British eating habits and meal patterns seems to be breaking, with new foods (eg yoghurt and pizzas), new processes (eg fast and convenience meals), new technology (eg home freezers), with ethnic take-aways, the popularity of pub food, proliferating health-food shops, etc. Plainly many influences are at work, social and economic, psychological, cultural and - we hope and believe - health education among them. We ought to know too about the mythology and the new symbols involved in the enthusiasm for health and fitness that now is spreading across the Western world. Professor Douglas's help would be invaluable.

The most interesting of recent trends in this country as described in my letter (February 11), namely the increased consumption of brown and wholemeal bread, and the shift from butter and "hard" margarines to the newer "soft" margarines and vegetable oils, cannot simply be explained on price. Hard margarine is cheaper than soft, and wholemeal bread remains unaccountably expensive. Such improvements in the prevalent diet - they would be regarded as such by most public-health people - are evident in all four income groups of the National

Food Survey, and starting at about the same time in each. There is little evidence of the "trickle-down" effect, another unusual feature in a field that is full of the unexpected and the challenging.

In the same week that Elizabeth Deutsch's letter appeared (March 18), the *New England Journal of Medicine* carried information on food consumption trends in the USA up to 1981. Fortunately, masses of Americans are taking the messages of nutrition education more seriously than Ms Deutsch: between 1963 and 1981, there was a 40 per cent reduction in the consumption of animal fats and oils in the USA, for example, and a 58 per cent increase of vegetable fats and oils. That of fish rose by 23 per cent (why do we make so little effort in this country for this splendid food?).

How much the remarkable recent decline of mortality from coronary heart disease in the USA (and Canada, Australia, Finland) is due to such dietary changes, and how much to the decline of cigarette-smoking (27 per cent in the USA), and the huge increase in jogging and other exercise, is already a subject for historical research and facts are proving hard to disentangle. By contrast, the position in this country is less satisfactory, though a fall in the coronary death rate seems at last to be under way. There is great scope for action - by central and local government, agriculture and the food industry, the media; by the health service and the schools; and by all of us, individuals, parents and communities. Nutrition education has its part to play, and it is cheering in a harsh world that people increasingly want to know.

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'Pilgermann'

Sir, - I make it a rule never to comment on reviews of my novels. I do not, however, tolerate any criticism of my prefaces; they are simple statements of fact in which I offer a few words on the origins of the book and acknowledge the help given me by various people.

Among this week's contributors

ROBERT BRAIN is the author of *Friends and Lovers*, 1977, and *Black and White Rites*, 1979.

MARY KATHLEEN BENET's books include *The Character of Adoption*, 1976.

ANTONY BRETT-JAMES is the editor of *Europe against Napoleon - The Leipzig Campaign, 1813*; from eyewitness accounts, 1970.

JOHN E. BOWLT is Professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Texas.

ROSE CALDINAL's *Figures of Reality: A Perspective on the Poetic Imagination* was published in 1981.

ALICE CARTER's books include *The Dutch Republic in Europe in The Seven Years War*, 1971.

GORDON A. CRAIG's *Germany 1866-1945* was published in 1978.

DICK DAVIS's most recent collection of poems is *Seeing the World*, 1980.

C. R. DOOWELL is Head of the History of Art Department at the University of Manchester and Director of the Whitworth Art Gallery.

KEN ELAM is the author of *The Semantics of Theatre and Drama*, 1980.

NICHOLAS GREEN's *Shakespeare, Jonson, Marlowe, the Comic Contract* was published in 1981.

NORMAN HAMPTON's books include *Pea Soup*, was published last year.

JULIE HANKEY's theatre-historical edition of *Richard III* was published in 1981.

RICHARD HARRIS writes on Asian affairs for *The Times*.

ROBERT HEWSON's *In Anger: Culture in the Cold War 1945-1980* was published in 1981.

MICHAEL HOPMANN's poems have appeared in *Poetry Introduction* 5.

GWYN JONES is the editor of *The Oxford Book of Welsh Verse in English*, 1977.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

KENNETH O. MORGAN's most recent book is *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1890*, 1981.

BLAKE MORRISON is Deputy Literary Editor of the *Observer*. His *Seamus Heaney* was published last year.

DAVID NOKES is a lecturer in English at King's College, London.

RICHARD OLLARO's books include *An English Education: A Perspective of 1980*, 1982.

VALERIE PEARL is the President of New Hall, Cambridge.

S. S. PRAYER's *Heine's Jewish Comedy* will be published later this year.

CHRISTOPHER REID's collection of poems, *Pea Soup*, was published last year.

PAT ROGERS is the author of *Henry Fielding: A Biography*, 1979.

STEPHEN ROMER edits the bilingual review, *TwoFold*.

ANDREW SAINT is Architectural Editor of *The Survey* of London.

C. H. Sisson's translation of *The Divine Comedy* was published in 1980.

STUART SUTHERLAND is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Sussex.

MICHAEL TANNER is a lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Cambridge.

JOHN B. THOMPSON's *Critical Hermeneutics* was published in 1982.

CHARLES TOMLINSON is Professor of English at the University of Bristol. His *Poetry and Metamorphosis*, the Clark Lectures for 1982, will be published this spring.

DAVID VAISY is Keeper of Western Manuscripts at the Bodleian Library.

P. J. WALLER's *Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914* will be published later this year.

STANLEY WELLS is General Editor of the *Oxford Shakespeare*.

DICK WILSON's books include *When Tigers Fight: The Story of the Sino-Japanese War 1937-45*, 1982.

to the editor

'Lycidas'

Sir, - The conflict between classical and Christian values and the degree of resolution achieved by John Milton in *Lycidas* continue to be major factors in critical appreciation of this poem.

While working on the poem in a sixth-form seminar we believe we have come upon a cryptic message underlining the Christian concept of reconciliation which exists within the classical framework of *Lycidas*.

Has any one previously remarked the significance of the words of the *unrhymed* line-endings in this poem, otherwise heavily rhymed in Italianate style? We found seven words for which there is no rhyme or near-rhyme in this work of nearly two hundred lines. They are, in order: *shroud*, *cave*, *Lycidas*, *Jove*, *swain*, *guest*, *mount*. We don't feel we are being too fanciful in reading into these words an account of *Lycidas*' apotheosis (not to mention links with the Resurrection), in which the "swain *Lycidas*" (poet Edward Klug) leaves the underwater cave which is his tomb and mounts to heaven as "Jove's" guest.

We should be interested to have the comments of better-informed readers than ourselves. We see as an additional Christian key to a poem in the classical mode. Is our suggestion plausible and, if so, why did Milton use this concealed support? Is it just typical of an age addicted to ciphers and puzzles - or was this some kind of belt and braces device to support the Christian view which could be said to sit somewhat uneasily within the classical poem?

ROBERT BARNES.
DARREN BRIDGWOOD.
KATE BUDD.
JO FRIEW.
SARAH HEDLEY.
CHRISTOPHER JOHNSON.
JOANNE MARSHALL.
HELEN SAYERS.
JULIA SCHOFFIELD.
JANICE SHAKESPEARE.
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'Humphry Clinker'

Sir, - Once and for all, could your reviewers and proof-readers please realize that the only correct spelling of Smollett's last eponymous hero is *Humphrey* (without a 'y'). It is both surprising and annoying to see Anne Smith refer to Smollett's epistolary masterpiece as *Humphrey* [sic]. *Clinker* in her review (March 18) of the reprint of *The Beggar's Benison*. As is well known to all Smollettians and eighteenth-century scholars, the onomastic shift from the aristocratic *Humphrey* to the demotically curtailed *Humphry* was deliberate on the author's part.

PAUL-GABRIEL BOUCE.
Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris III, 5 rue de l'Ecole de Médecine, Paris 6.

'Brecht's Early Plays'

Sir, - In his review of my *Brecht's Early Plays* (March 25) Ronald Hayman objects to the description of Garga's profession in *In the Jungle* as "bookseller". Yet sell books is precisely what Garga does, according to the text of the play, and the imagery of buying and selling is crucial to the development of the action. In the opening scene Garga says to his enemy, Shlink, "I'll sell you the New Testament, but not my opinion of it"; one of Shlink's hoodlums says to Mr Maynes, Garga's employer, "You let books be sold here by seducers of seamstresses"; Shlink says to Maynes, "Don't stick your nose into things. This is a deal between me and your salesman 'verkäufer'". Maynes's "Leihbibliothek" belongs to the once popular and widespread type of private-enterprise "lending library" in which books were available for hire, and for purchase.

R. C. SPEIRS.
Department of German, University of Birmingham.

A *World History of Art* by Hugh Honour and John Fleming is published by Macmillan, not Methuen as stated in the publication details preceding Jonathan Keates's review of the book, in our March 25 issue.

'The Ellipse'

Sir, - Between proof and publication, nonsense has been made in two places in my review of *The Ellipse* by Leonardo Sinisgalli (March 25). In the first I comment on the translation of "estinta" with "extinct" thus: "Here again the translator is rather too portentous. The voice 'estinta' has died away: there are no dodos in this poet's world". In the second I object to the translation of "in-briante" ("making drunk"); your curious "in-briante" moves it one step too near the word the translator mistook it for.

KEITH BOSLEY.
108 Upton Road, Slough, Berkshire.

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Hungering and surviving

Lachlan Mackinnon

PAUL HYLAND

Poems of Z

64pp. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Bloodaxe Books. £3.25

GEOFFREY ADKINS

A Difficult Peace

46pp. Sunderland: Ceolfrith Press. £3.50. 0 904461 73 4

GLEN CAVALIERO

Elegy for St. Anne's

and other poems. 51pp. North Walsham, Norfolk: Warren House Press. £7.50.

ROGER MCGOUGH

Waving at Trains

62pp. Capc. £2.50. 0 224 02058 7

Paul Hyland presents us with a sequence of forty poems which purport to have been written by a man who "seems to have been engaged in intelligence activities in the U.K. for a number of years", and whose background is in Eastern Europe. Z's moral crisis and need to write, "A need my comrades would scoff at / If they knew, scoff in our own tongue", leads him to adopt a language which "moves differently in my mouth". Through his poetry he can recapture his childhood on a farm and question the ideas by which he has lived. Having been "consecrated to correct economics", the "bright pupil" has only a "dull eye" and has not added "a cubit" to his stature. He discovers that "the heart has grown up twice / faithless atheist", and continues:

Materialism & History
are not enough
I want more I want more
the hungry heart

The ideas of this sequence are fascinating. Clearly, Z is in many ways an archetypal poet, for whom language constitutes a world, but he is given sufficient reality to ensure that his poems compose more than an aesthetic tract. He has a defiant pride in his art, and a persuasive foreignness when he says of Britain

A house divided
against itself
—eyes already
clogged with coin—
does not need Samson

Hyland makes us believe that this judgment on himself and on his surroundings has been earned.

It is therefore all the more disappointing not to be impressed by these poems as poems. The language does not always feel as new as it should, and is sometimes extraordinarily uneven. "Watch, listen to the audience/ collate/ designate/ transmit/ adrenalize/ instill/ the head gathers intelligence/ runs one stanza, dully ungrammatical; 'The face knows nothing/ the heart knows something else' runs the next, teasingly aphoristic.

Geoffrey Adkins is a much more straightforward writer, whose subject-matter is largely autobiographical. Sometimes his work is defaced by sentimentality about class — "London smart-arses" is a phrase that really doesn't say very much — but at its best it has a convincing objectivity. "Boscombe House" shows the poet's strengths, describing the "hidout" after the deposed monarch/ after the royalist rout at Worcester. "We're the only visitors", and "I year old Jessie" digs at the star-headed floor nails/ for the sunken glint of privilege. The magpie infant's greed

for brightness is kept just this side of the crudely explicit. Adkins is delighted by the austerity of the house, unmarred by the "gaudy stories about royalty". The father's republican dooms and the child's innocence of the meanings he perceives are held in an expressive balance.

The trouble is that that balance is rarely achieved. Too often the knowing adult crowds out the "wide-eyed" childliness, from which the poems would benefit. In "The Word", for example, his child's "dal dal dal" is interpreted as "It is! It is! I am!", the words around us, shuddering green canopy, ripped through by the Word.

Again the idea of a poem and not the thing itself. Adkins's poetry is entirely lacking in verbal excitement; it conveys a socialist realism which may be morally honourable and at times moving, but which never risks complete commitment to a unique and necessary form of either metre or language.

When Geoffrey Adkins is a tourist he seas politics: it is very hard to make out what Glen Cavaliero sees. "At Guisborough Priory" he remembers "a true gardener/ bent on growth/ like this conde/der arch of order"; this is clear enough, but somehow pointless. The old symbols are shuffled around, but they draw no life from the exercise. The most inventive poem in the book is about writer's block. In it, Cavaliero says of poets "Oh, we shall be bottled, stood/ as a few/ rounds/ to the eventually thirsty, found/ to be what they're after" and advises his compeer to "Sweet this out/ Let the good star too you/ Lofty, nutty/ as a crisp and generate/ for it can't your cue". He veers rapidly from image to image, creating a blur in the reader's mind. Perhaps what he sees is culture.

Certainly, his poems are very self-consciously poetic. Cavaliero never

relaxes: his excessive use of enjambement makes us restless, while the pointlessness of his piling on of metaphors makes us bored. "The stroke of clock and stick provide/ the quietness of perfect sound", one landscape poem ends, and the fact that we are tempted to ask "So what?" is the fault of the poet's earnestness. His own line, "Lofty, nutty", describes this very expensive book rather well.

The bombast of Cavaliero's poems, however, is no more unlikeable than the tittering complacency of Roger McGough's. "Where once/ I used to/ scintillate/ now I sin/ till ten/ past three", indeed: the coming of age and the weariness of the flash serve only to remind us that McGough's real place is in the cosy little world of Popsy Simmonds. All the good courses are here — love, poetry, vegetarianism and a cynicism about the values of high culture; the incoherence of believing in both the second and the fourth is amply displayed by these verses.

A good example is the final pair of

poems, "Rebbit in Mixer Surfer" and "Happy Ending". The first is based on a *Daily Telegraph* report about a rabbit which fell into a concrete mixer. The rabbit is begged by young rabbits to tell the story: "De old adventurer smiled/ And wove/ a wrinkled paw".

Near-blind eyes began to food
As the part that doesn't age
Drifted back to bunnyhood.

Sndy, he is being victimized, and he is "e game they played/ One cruller with each year".
"Poor old Granddad" they thured
As they one by one withdrew
"He's told it all so often
He now believes it's true."

Sean as "the old campaigner/ imprisoned in his role", the table takes on a pathetic dignity as a man with a gun approaching. The "Happy Ending" is that the man has come out to commit suicide. It is at that point should so childishly display the simple effects of which it is capable.

Settling for safety

Dick Davis

MICHAEL CULLUP

Reading Geographies

63pp. Manchester: Carcanet New Press. £3.25. 0 85635 429 5

KEITH CHANDLER

Kett's Rebellion and other poems

59pp. Manchester: Carcanet New Press. £3.25. 0 85635 277 2

Michael Cullup's first book, is not a young man's poetry; he writes of a personified Sloth. "Disabused of fancies / And the grandiose / He changed nothing" and we believe him — he is, in the words of another poem, "the corrupted figure who became / Emperor of habit, the creature with a pipe". "Disabused" and "corrupted" — the poet wavers between seeing his middle age as the clear-eyed rejection of illusion, and the betrayal of youthful hope and energy; his quietism is willed but tinged with self-contempt. In the typical "A Sense of Style" he begins

Those of us who've played it safe for years
Can afford to be amused in Walt Whitman
but ends with the admission that the "wa" will understand
That Walt Whitman will be read aloud
Long after our private lives have been forgotten

By hypocrites without a sense of style.
The poem has hovered between rejecting and endorsing Whitman (or at least rejecting those who would reject him), and the last line appears finally to decide the issue. But which way? Is it better to be quite forgotten or remembered by "hypocrites without a sense of style"? And are we — who do willy-nilly remember Whitman — numbered among the hypocrites? The anger and ambiguity are not a confusion but a summing-up of the poet's unresolved and contradictory perceptions.

Cullup is a poet of boredom, inconvenience, compromise and let-down; throughout the book we feel the tension between so earlier and a later self, between youth averse from magnificence and passion and relative age that looks for "The promise got at last by being still". An earlier poem, "Something impossible", recounts a simple incident that is like a metaphor for the dominant feeling of the book; a child tows a ball over a wall, and waits to yawn to bear it load or bounce. The poem ends
Still he heard nothing
Except as if for the first time.
His head heart-beat
Resolute and convulsed.
Challenging the world to call his name.

But there is no response and the child is left with his own unwarmed existence. The poem ends with this taste of disillusion and foiled expectancy — a taste that inheres as

much in their clipped, dactylic rhythms as in the vocabulary employed or the incidents recounted. Their tone has a curiously unconvicted, deliberate lack of resonance about it that can read like a verse of C. H. Sisson or Geoffrey Grigson; it is not the knowledge of the dandy but the self-awareness of one on whom — in Grevel's phrase — "the black ox hath trod".

The poems are not all gloom and doom; true, there are some very clipped, desperate lines about the beloved behaving rather like the world in "Something impossible", refusing the answering gesture he would confirm the poet's claims (and worth), but the poems are very far from mawkishness and self-pity. By irony, the laughter in "Kett's Rebellion" is born like "Porridge" (boredom being avowed by the image of a "old shaggy cat... a sack of 'and mangle"). "Sleeping Apes" and "Ruined Apple" have an unerring sour edge which is laughter nevertheless.

It would be perverse to expect glittering metaphors, or Yeatsian rhetoric from a poet of Cullup's evident preoccupation. Indeed, Cullup clearly doubts whether he approves of the grandiose; he occasionally finds himself hesitating, rather than celebrating of it, and has made itself familiar with some very murky corners of the psyche.

Keith Chandler's *Kett's Rebellion* is more obviously a first collection than Cullup's; some of the poems betray an uncertainty of tone, and two have an air of the poorly thought out, being neat versions of many reasonably competent verses that could have produced. The title poem suggests that Chandler sees modern life by those poems prompted by a historical imagination and a sense of humour. The poems are very much in the manner of Whitman, with Cromwell and with Whitman, contain many of the same themes, and some of the same language. The poet is kindly and accurate in his grasp of the world, but he is also a poet of the flesh. His forth would seem to be a rambling, catch-all narrative, full of asides and bits of inconsequence, a folk-written autobiographical poem. But in the similarly composed "Heroic couplets (this time)" to the District Surveyor, the writer allowed a little too much to be said on his own good and becomes, to use Chandler's own words, "a poet of three best short poems in the book".

It is again the background of this Whitman reorientation of Marxist thought that one can reconstruct some of the major strands in the work of these two poets. Chandler's early work, *Kett's Rebellion*, since his earliest writings has been concerned with the "historical" processes of class struggle, a "public sphere" of open argumentation and debate — a sphere which flourished in eighteenth-century

Reaching an understanding

John B. Thompson

JÜRGEN HABERMAS

Theorie der kommunikativen

Handlung: Band 1, Handlungsrationality und gesellschaftliche Rationalisierung. 534pp.

Band 2, Zur Kritik der funktionalistischen Vernunft. 633pp. 3518 07591 8

RENÉ GÖRTZEN

Jürgen Habermas: Eine Bibliographie: seiner Schriften und der Sekundärliteratur 1952-1981.

230pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. 3518 07597 7

Social theorists have long been concerned with the question of what defines the societies in which we live as distinctively modern. What are the key features which differentiate the "developed" societies of Europe and North America from their historical predecessors, as well as from those of social organization which have persisted elsewhere in the world? Among the classical social theorists it was above all Max Weber who addressed himself directly to this question. In his celebrated study of *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, and in his detailed investigations of the great religions of the world, Weber sought to identify some of the characteristics peculiar to Western civilization. He called attention, for example, to the development of natural science and its institutionalization in the universities; to the formation and separation of a capitalist economy and a bureaucratic state administration; and to the emergence of a methodical conduct of life directed to calculation and personal gain.

Weber placed particular emphasis on the latter characteristic, for he regarded the transformation in the aims or orientations of action as a crucial factor in the rise of capitalism. The terms of Protestantism which appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries called for a change of attitude and thereby enabled individuals, in the name of a religious ethic, to engage in restless worldly activity. Once the system of capitalist activity had been established, it could dispense with the religious conditions that originally made it possible. Capitalism, dynamic and victorious, acquired an autonomy of its own; together with the domination of state administration, it led to the progressive "rationalization" of action domains, that is, to the progressive assimilation of all types of action to a model in which the actor is concerned to calculate the most suitable means for the attainment of specific ends or goals. Weber's prognosis for the future of those societies overturned by such developments was largely pessimistic: "Specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart; this outlook imagines that it has attained a level of civilization never before achieved."

Since the early 1920s the writings of Weber have had a sobering effect on certain forms of Marxist thought. The capacity of advanced capitalist societies to stifle and absorb forces of opposition, as well as the appearance of oppressive régimes to societies wishing the banner of socialism, seemed to lend support to Weber's prognosis. The final conclusion to this line of reflection was drawn in the 1940s by some members of the so-called Frankfurt School. Thus Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno and others came to see the pervasive and seemingly irreversible spread of "instrumental reason" as the very medium of social repression. Marx's confidence in the emancipatory consequences of expanding forces of production was abandoned.

It is against the background of this Weberian reorientation of Marxist thought that one can reconstruct some of the major strands in the work of Jürgen Habermas. Since his earliest writings Habermas has been concerned with the "historical" processes of class struggle, a "public sphere" of open argumentation and debate — a sphere which flourished in eighteenth-century

Europe — has been increasingly restricted by the growth of large-scale economic and administrative organizations. These organizations can be understood as systems of goal-directed action, and their growth seen as a type of rationalization which threatens to overrun every sphere of life, disrupting patterns of interaction and stifling processes of communication. Such is the central theme of Habermas's most recent work, *Theorie der kommunikativen Handlung*, a substantial two-volume study that displays all of the rigour and systematicity, the vision and originality, which have justly earned him the reputation of being the foremost social and political thinker in Germany today.

While Habermas accepts the importance of Weber's theory of rationalization for understanding the development of Western societies, he believes that this theory must be revised considerably. To begin with, one must take account of two theoretical "shifts" which occurred in philosophy and social science subsequent to Weber and to those early "critical theorists" influenced by him. The first shift is from a teleological concept of action — that is, from viewing action as the successful pursuit of an agent's aims or desires — to a concept of *communicative action*, which emphasizes the interaction in which two or more subjects seek to reach an understanding concerning their shared situation. Underlying this first shift is the transition from the philosophy centred on the conscious subject to a philosophy preoccupied with language, a transition which should be followed through, Habermas argues, by a critical reappraisal of "linguistic philosophy".

The second theoretical shift is from a critique of instrumental reason to a critique of *functionalism*; for it is in the writings of social theorists who have "espoused" some form of functionalism — or functionalist systems theory, such as Talcott Parsons and Niklas Luhmann, that one can find both a key to analysing the processes of rationalization and the limits of a purely formal or "objective" approach to such processes. It is on the basis of these two shifts that Habermas defines his task: that of elaborating a theoretical framework which demonstrates the interconnections of communicative action and social systems, while at the same time providing a basis for comprehending the tensions and tendencies, the conflicts, crises and potentialities, of the modern era.

In formulating the concept of communicative action, Habermas wishes to draw attention to what he calls "the validity basis of speech". Speaking is a way of acting; this was already stressed by J. L. Austin and others, Habermas is interested, not so much in the particular acts one can perform with specific utterances, but rather in the general presuppositions that we make in uttering and responding to speech-acts. In uttering an expression the speaker makes an offer which the hearer can either accept or reject. Suppose a flight attendant says to a passenger, "You must stop smoking, now". The attendant is making an offer — or, as Habermas prefers to say, raising a validity-claim — which the passenger can accept by extinguishing the cigarette or reject by asking "Why?". In the latter case the attendant must give some reasons or grounds which would support the validity-claim raised with the speech-act, for example by pointing out that the plane will soon be landing and that the safety regulations stipulate no smoking at such a time. The validity-claim raised with a speech-act is thus intimately connected with reasons or grounds, and it is in this internal connection which shows that there is a "rationally motivating force" operating within the process of communication. "A speaker can rationally motivate a hearer to accept his speech-act," offers Habermas, "because he can assume the warrant for providing, if need be, convincing grounds which would stand up to the hearer's criticism of the validity-claim."

According to Habermas, at least three distinguishable validity-claims are raised with the utterance of speech-acts. A speaker may raise the claim that the statement made is *true*; that the speech-act is *correct* in terms of the prevailing normative context; and that the intention of the speaker is as it is expressed, that is, that the speaker is sincere in what he or she says. In raising these claims the speaker takes up relations to any of three object domains or "worlds", with regard to which a claim can be contested by a hearer: the *objective world* as the totality of entities about which true statements are possible; the *social world* as the totality of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations; and the *subjective world* as the totality of experiences to which the speaker has privileged access. Not all of these validity-claims and corresponding utterances of every speech-act. Particular types of speech-act give prominence to specific validity-claims and world-relations, as the issuing of commands, for example, highlights the claim to correctness and the relation to the social world. But Habermas maintains that with every speech-act intended to reaching understanding, as distinct from action oriented merely to the actor's own success, the speaker necessarily raises (albeit implicitly) all three of the claims which attest to the validity basis of speech.

In everyday interaction we seldom pursue the lines of inquiry rendered possible by the presupposed validity-claims. We take it for granted that the claims are satisfied or could be satisfied, and thus share with our participants in interaction a common set of convictions, a common *Lebenswelt* or "life-world". The life-world of a society or social group preserves and transmits the interpretative work of preceding generations. It creates a symbolic space, as it were, within which cultural tradition, social integration and personal identity are sustained and reproduced. These forms of "symbolic reproduction" must be distinguished from the processes whereby societies produce the goods and services necessary for the material welfare of their members. The latter processes can be conceptualized in terms of "functional systems" which co-ordinate actions around specific mechanisms or "media". In capitalist societies the most important example of such systems is the market, where the actions of individuals are co-ordinated around the medium of money. The state administration may also be regarded as a functional system, organized in this case around the medium of power.

The distinction between system and life-world, and the link between the life-world and the concept of communicative action, provide Habermas with the theoretical means to reformulate Weber's theory of rationalization. One must distinguish, argues Habermas, between two processes of rationalization which are in principle complementary, although in certain circumstances they may give rise to contradictory effects. With the evolution from clan societies through traditional to modern societies, system and life-world gradually separate and thenceforth follow their own paths of rationalization. The rationalization of social systems can be characterized in terms of their *growth in complexity*; thus the transition from traditional to modern societies in Europe can be viewed in part as the formation and expansion of markets organized around the medium of money. The rationalization of life-worlds, on the other hand, can be characterized in terms of both the *separation of spheres of value* and the *advancement of levels of learning*. In the development of legal institutions, for example, one can trace a process whereby law becomes increasingly divorced from morality, and increasingly linked to what Habermas calls, following Piaget, a "post-conventional" pattern of conflict resolution. The rationalization of the life-world gradually calls into question the traditional assumptions and convictions upon which interaction rests, so that symbolic reproduction

becomes potentially more dependent on the lines of inquiry opened up by the validity basis of speech.

The two paths of rationalization are not, however, unconnected; and it is in terms of their intersection that one can, Habermas contends, understand some of the traits and tensions of the modern era. While the rationalization of the life-world increases the *potential* for linking symbolic reproduction to the validity basis of speech, at the same time it allows for further growth in the complexity of systems which react back on the life-world and threaten to stifle that potential. This is what Habermas calls "the inner colonization of the life-world". The processes of material production overstep the boundaries of the economic and administrative systems, giving rise to crises which "can be avoided only at the cost of disturbances in the symbolic reproduction of the life-world". In order to explain why this inner colonization occurs, Habermas develops an account which, while drawing on Marx, nevertheless recognizes that Marx's analysis cannot be applied directly to contemporary capitalist societies. For in these societies the state has assumed a major role in attempting to control the conflicts and crises stemming from the economic sphere. Hence the basic tensions that characterize our societies today are not manifested directly in the form of class conflict, but rather are displaced on to those points of friction where the economic and administrative systems impinge upon the life-world. New conflicts arise in the spheres of cultural reproduction and social integration, new groups appear which protest against the uncontrolled growth of system complexity. From this perspective one can appreciate the significance of popular movements "advocating ecology and peace, such as the 'Greens' in Germany or the CND in Britain. Such movements indicate, in Habermas's view, that the major problems facing advanced industrial societies have to do with the self-destructive consequences of system growth — a growth which threatens to silence that potential for reflection which, with the rationalization of the life-world, has become accessible to us.

In the 1,200 pages of *Theorie der kommunikativen Handlung* Habermas develops these arguments with a philosophical rigour and historical depth that can hardly be conveyed in the space of a short review. Yet the preceding paragraphs provide sufficient content for considering several objections that may be levelled against Habermas's approach. While the concept of communicative action is of great interest, one may doubt whether it can bear the enormous theoretical burden which is placed upon it. Within the utterance of an ordinary speech-act Habermas discerns, not only the presupposition of three validity-claims and their corresponding world-relations, but also the assumption that these validity-claims can be made good or "redeemed" through processes of argumentation which take form in specific types of discourse and criticism. We might well be surprised by the weighty implications of our words! In just what sense, we might well ask, are claims to truth and correctness — let alone "theoretical" and "practical" discourses with their complex logical machinery and strong normative assumptions — implicated in the "mundane greetings we issue to acquaintances or strangers on the street, in the light-hearted joking that fills much of the linguistic exchange among friends, or in any number of the practices that constitute the communicative texture of everyday life. Habermas has a response to this line of criticism, but the reader will doubtless be dissatisfied with the arguments which are supposed to show that "action oriented to reaching understanding" can be regarded as "the original mode of language use."

It is part of Habermas's view that the full implications of communicative action are not manifest everywhere and at all times, but come to light only in the course of social evolution. The modern understanding of the world, which recognizes different validity-

claims and distinguishes several object domains, is the result of processes of rationalization; it contrasts markedly with the "mythical thought" studied by anthropologists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss. Habermas is not content, however, with contrasting the modern and mythical forms of thought. He wishes to ascribe a certain universality to the modern form of understanding, to defend what he regards as "the justified claim to universality on behalf of the rationality that gained expression in the modern understanding of the world". There is a touch of paradox about this attempt to defend such a claim at a time when so many modern thinkers are busy dismantling it. And indeed, the considerations which Habermas adduces in this regard are not altogether convincing. He leans heavily on the contributions of "reconstructive sciences", like the developmental psychology of Piaget, since he believes that the claim to universality cannot be defended in a purely philosophical way. But this appeal to Piaget, this inhospitable projection of cognitive stages of development on to the history of world-views, will leave many doubts in the minds of readers who are less sure that they have approached the pinnacle of the phylogenetic scale.

It would be one-sided to assess Habermas's work in conceptual and theoretical terms without appreciating its significance as a *Gegenwartigsdiskussion*, an analysis of the present day. The way in which Habermas uses his framework to interpret contemporary social processes is illuminating and highly suggestive. Nevertheless, for those who live in the industrial societies of today, the analysis offered may seem somewhat remote and out of date. With unemployment at unprecedented levels and still climbing, with fluctuating interest rates and low demand pushing many businesses to the wall, the notion that tensions stemming from the productive sphere are managed by the state and dispersed into other domains appears to require more qualifications than it may have needed a decade ago. Moreover, a society, perhaps "a" nation-state, remains the *pièce de touche* of Habermas's account. Nowhere does he consider in detail the international system of nation-states, the multinational alliances which profoundly affect economic development, and threaten one another's survival with the accumulated means of waging war. It is at best incomplete to interpret the conflicts and protest movements of our societies from within a framework that filters out the confrontation of nation-states and the politics of mass destruction.

Whatever limitations there may be to Habermas's approach, there can be no doubt that *Theorie der kommunikativen Handlung* represents a major contribution to contemporary social theory. Not only does it provide a compelling critique of some of the main perspectives in twentieth-century philosophy and social science, but it also presents a systematic synthesis of many of the themes which have preoccupied Habermas for thirty years. The reader who wishes to pursue the itinerary of Habermas's thought, will find a valuable aid in the bibliography compiled by René Görtzen, who lists some 250 publications by Habermas and nearly a thousand items of secondary literature. This bibliography is a remarkable testimony to the productivity of, and public acclaim accorded to, an author who has consistently and courageously defended the value of open argument and debate.

In *The New Working Class? White-Collar Workers and their Organizations: A Reader* (285pp., Macmillan, £20, paperback £7.95, 0 333 27283 8), Richard Hyman and Robert Price have assembled significant contributions from the literature of this subject. Papers are grouped under eleven headings that include "Technicians in Modern Capitalism", "The Search for Theory: Synthesis of Dissonance?", "The Early History of White-Collar Unionism", "White-Collar Union Character" and "White-Collar Workers and Attitudes to Trade Unions".

The poetry of piety

C. H. Sisson

C. A. PATRIDES (Editor)

George Herbert: The Critical Heritage
390pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£25.
0 7100 9240 7

It says something about current academic practice that Routledge and Kegan Paul succeed in marketing, under the title of the Critical Heritage Series, bundles of criticism of writers who have hardly had time to collect a heritage of any kind. However useful it may be to have compendia of what has been said about Eliot, Pound, Joyce, Forster, William Carlos Williams, Beckett, Nabokov or even George Orwell – and here, if not before, one's confidence begins to sag a bit – all they can contain is near-contemporary appreciations on which the irony of time has barely begun to play. With George Herbert (1833–1833) the case is quite different. C. A. Patrides has had four centuries to draw on, and he has wisely restricted the twentieth century to less than eighty pages and the nineteenth century to little over a hundred, so enabling himself to give almost comprehensive coverage to what comes before that. We thus have matter for a study not only of the ups and downs of a reputation but of changes in approach to the poetry and indeed in critical habits at large.

The matter from the seventeenth century is hardly literary-critical at all, in any of the ways in which that term is now understood. It starts with a mere exchange of verses between friends – Donne's lines to Herbert, sent with one of his seals "of the Anchor and Christ", and Herbert's reply. Next comes Bueon's dedication of his *Psalmes*, a polite return for Herbert's shore in translating *The Advancement of Learning* into Latin and perhaps with the *arrivée-pensée* that Herbert's would be a good name to invoke as he ventured into the fields of poetry and piety, for neither of which the former Lord Chancellor was himself famous. Then we come to Nicholas Ferrar and with him to the point which has exercised Professor Patrides most, in making his collection, that of an "ulterior motive", standing in the way of what he regards as the proper appreciation of the "poetry as poetry". People will regard Mr Herbert as holy, and *The Temple* as an aid to devotion. It is no good expecting anything better from Nicholas Ferrar, who was busy at Little Gidding with similar concerns and also it was for Ferrar that Herbert delivered his manuscript, on his deathbed, with instructions to publish or destroy as he thought best, he must be regarded as being as close to Herbert's mind as anybody. Is that a critical consideration? It might be. Admittedly it is dangerous ground. Patrides calls attention to Vaughan's regrettable emphasis on Herbert's "holy life and verse". As if a life could equal a verse, he seems to say – or perhaps only, "as if a life should be taken account of, in reading a verse". Of course it often is, in the case of lives which make a point of being rather unholily – no more popular subject, in fact.

But of course Patrides is right to feel anxious. We have seen the name of Rimbaud swept along on a tide of notions as to what constitutes the good life, to thousands who do not care for his excellent poetry. Such figures caught in political currents and the sale of *The Temple* – 20,000 copies in the years 1870 – must owe a lot to the banning of Anglican worship and the suppression of episcopacy, to say nothing of the death of the king in 1689. Patrides gives us at length Benjamin Oliver's *Refractory View of the Life of Mr George Herbert* (1844), which is the fullest, says, "water acknowledged" by Walton – as indispensable for some of those truths he himself was to extend. Walton's life of course dominates the "heritage" of the seventeenth century, and the biographies, in so little "critical". We are given an interesting extract from Ralph Knevel, not published until 1966. Knevel, though anxious to follow Herbert, in his *Devotions*, must count as a man of letters for he attempted to complete *The Poet's Poem* as well as to imitate

Herbert. He is well read and tells us that "Dante affords us better matter than words" – which shows how greater poets than Herbert have sunk from critical comprehension in their time; he also makes the good point that the meter of *The Temple* is better than that of the "sublimated Wines of our Nation" whose one notion is "to idolize some silly scornful woman into a fool's Paradise of self admiration". Seventeenth-century criticism comes alive for Patrides with what he calls Dryden's "explicitly pejorative allusion to Herbert's mode of articulation" when he banishes Shadwell to "some peaceful Province in Acrostic Land", but too much should not be made of this, which merely tells us that Dryden was heading in another direction, as we knew already. More significant evidence of the reception of Herbert's verse towards the end of the century is the collection of thirty-two poems into a hymn-book, in 1697, and the charming "Youth's Alphabet: or, Herbert's Morals", which Patrides calls "doggerel".

The eighteenth century opens with a flourish with Joseph Addison, that merely fashionable man, explaining in the *Spectator* that the taste of the best people has changed in a way that the town may not yet appreciate. It is thirty years after Dryden's crack, and that is about the time that such things still take. "This fashion of false wit... in particular may be met with among Mr Herbert's Poems." Then comes an awful exhibit in the form of an extract from a "considerable manuscript", happily unpublished, is one George Ryley, of whom nothing is known except this melancholy monument, which comprises "elaborate annotations" on *The Temple*, the "actual meaning" of which "was deemed to require explication in depth". I recommend a posthumous PhD for this author. In 1725 there are still some verses from John Reynolds, a moderate dissenting minister, "controlling the 'seraphic slinger' in eighteenth-century style and incidentally, distinguishing sharply between Herbert and the opportunist Christopher Harvey who had long ago managed to get his verse bound up with Herbert's. That seems to me evidence of continuing life of a kind, even though Reynolds regretfully regarded Herbert as a saint. Patrides makes an interesting allusion to Dr Johnson and in the same breath that he tells us there are seventy-eight references to Herbert in the *Dictionary* exclaims: "How fortunate for Johnson that no second hand reports of his views exist!" He would have made a fool of himself, Patrides implies. I do not think so, though Johnson would, of course, have shared the fatal weakness of so many others for Herbert's piety. Weasley, a tainted source again – loved Herbert and setting himself boldly against the taste of the day asserted that his poems were "scarce inferior either in sense or language to most compositions of the present age" – a masterly understatement. Cowper at twenty-one "pored upon" Herbert's poem all day long and his malady "never seemed so much alleviated" as while he was reading him. These may not be the tributes of literary critics, but they demonstrate that, if *The Temple* was less well known than in the previous century, it continued to attract the sort of readers its author would have wished to have.

It is in the nineteenth century, to which, after all, Patrides's conception of "poetry as poetry" really belongs, that what he sees as the critical dilemma in relation to Herbert really surfaces. Coleridge, with whom this section of the volume properly begins, speaks of Herbert as "comparatively little known" and praises him as an "equilibrated master of the most correct and natural language" but adds that he is "a poet of the generation of the poets" who "will never be felt without a sympathy with the mind and character of the man". Emerson, though already far from the forms of English criticism, was not clearly felt this sympathy; only his religion was a vaguer one and for him "criticism is silent in the exercise of higher faculties". Ruskin saw in Herbert "the purest uncorrupted Christianity" and claimed to owe to him "whatever has been great or

happiest in the course" of his own life. We are moving into an aura of nineteenth-century religiosity. George Eliot misquotes Herbert and spoils the rhythm. James Montgomery, a prolific writer of verse among which only the odd hymn has escaped oblivion, saw "devotion turned into a masquerade" about Herbert's writings; no doubt he could not stomach the familiar style and the unfamiliar ideas. *The Temple* of the nineteenth century is really *The Christian Year*, and the difference between the two books marks the decline in theological intelligence and sensibility, as well as in the general use of theological conceptions. Keble puts in a good word for himself by suggesting that Herbert is one of those who "appear rather to fall in... incidentally" with the "deepest subjects" instead of having "sought them purposely" – a good point, if one understands the implications in a sense the opposite of Keble's; for him the result of Herbert's method was "inappropriate, not to say chilling and repellent". Patrides is right to see ecclesiastical designs in the frequent republication of Herbert in the nineteenth century, but he does not indicate that the theological revival of the period was accompanied by a massive reprinting of older literature – the Parker Society's reprints, the works of Hooker, Cranmer, Andrews, Bramhall and many more, to the enrichment of the sociability of the twentieth as well as of the nineteenth century. Picking, to whose edition of Herbert Patrides draws attention, also brought out an edition of Jeremy Taylor and Fuller. There is no separating the revival of *The Temple* from the theological movements. The danger, as Patrides

points out, was that many readers "Herbert emerged as a proper Victorian" – though it is rather odd to talk of *The Temple* being "converted into a collection of poems replete with edifying matter". A. C. Benson, towards the end of the century, is surprisingly good in his distinction between Herbert's "curious elaboration of expression, an intensity of compression" and Keble's "indefinite garrulity, a tendency to diverge on side issues, a vivid displacement of language".

Patrides limits himself to the first third of the twentieth century; the last extract is dated 1936. It cannot be said that much enlightenment emerges from the early entries – from Dowden, William Alexander or H. C. Beeching, though Dowden does quote Sir John Coleridge's sensible remark that "if Herbert's words are sometimes hard, you may at least be sure that they always have a meaning" – which is really the discovery, if you call it a discovery, of the twentieth century. Clutton-Brock comes up with the observation that Herbert's thought "is less old-fashioned than that of most of the poets of the eighteenth or even the nineteenth century". We are in the world of Grierson and ultimately of Eliot, though we have still the bumbling Basil de Selincourt in, I am afraid, this very journal (TLS, March 2 1933). The selection concludes with an excellent extract from Austin Warren in the *American Review*. Warren invokes William Law, showing a sense of the traditions essential for an understanding of Herbert. He notes Herbert's fondness for "homely analogies and illustrations" and that "when writing for himself, not for

'labouring people', he used such analogies as they would understand". He remarks that "this sentence structure is that of the English Bible... Its syntax rarely admits of any other mode of poetic dislocation; his sentence structure, that of good conversation – though firm, yet supple and easy." It is the best of critical summaries.

Throughout the centuries of its "heretics", Herbert refuses to disappear behind his poems, perhaps because he moves so small a distance from the centre of his own mind. The general question this volume raises is indeed whether there is such a thing as "poetry as poetry". What would be the life of a poet if he were to live in the world, there is no unwinding Herbert from the cocoon of meaning wrapped about him, or of understanding that except as part of the literature of Anglicanism, now treated with contempt by those who are supposed to be its guardians. There is a sense in which a religious is a literature, or a least cannot exist without one. For the literary critic – and for that more important character, the reader – the older literature can survive only as the past remains alive, and the means having some sense of a religious. What was said about Herbert in the seventeenth century, however injudicious in the light of modern critical theory, is more important than what our own century has managed to say about him, and Walton's *Life* is the best introduction to *The Temple*.

Finally, it must be pointed out that for £25 the purchaser will get only a reproduction from edited typeset, more like a thesis than a book.

Dangerous disjunctions

David Nokes

JEREMY TREGLOWN (Editor)

Spirit of Wit: Reconsiderations of Rochester
199pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £14.
0 631 12897 2

"Lord Rochester", remarked Pope, was "a holiday poet", one of that "mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease". Nowadays, as Pater Porter observes in his essay "The Professional Amateur", this charge of dilettantism presents far more of an obstacle to Rochester's reputation: that his notorious obscenity. Modern readers who can happily swallow down four-letter words find the affectations of aristocratic wit in their throats. In fact Rochester's ease was as much a product of study as of style. He was a master of the art that conceals art. His serious output, like his life, was brief and gaudy; a dozen lyrics, a dozen lampoons and half-a-dozen satires. Yet, argues Porter, the quality of those satires was surpassed only by Pope himself. "He passed the baton on to Pope and thereby on to the rest of English poetry. It never went through Dryden's hands."

Defining the elusive quality that marks out Rochester's poetry from that of the rest of the mob of gentlemen is the business of several of the essays in *Spirit of Wit*. For the editor, Jeremy Treglow, the distinctive quality is "an idiosyncrasy, a complexity of 'tone' which, for Barbara Everett, is the 'dangerous disjunctions of language which locally fracture the style, like the minute cracks that beauty crackleware ceramics'. John Wilders takes issue with L. C. Knights's well-known distinction between the poets of the early seventeenth century, such as Donne and Herbert, and those of the Restoration. According to Knights, the works of the former are characterized by a recognition of "the multiple nature of man", whereas the Restoration poets presented a "reductive simulacrum, only stressing the rational and social elements in man". To the exclusion of other qualities, Eliot's ambivalence of the disjunction of sensibility lurks behind such distinctions and in his brisk essay Wilders successfully indicates several of the shared themes and attitudes that bridge the temporal gap between Donne and Rochester. The special

achievement of both men, he argues, is to create "the impression of an underlying insecurity at the very moment when [they] seem most assured".

The Earl of Clarendon accounted for the cynicism and libertinism of the mob of gentlemen and their friends by the fact that they "had been born and bred in those corrupt times when there was no King in Israel". There was a generation to which morality, like power, seemed to go for good. "There was nothing to do", wrote Porter, "but act up." The upheavals in the social hierarchy made this generation of young aristocrats, as Basil Greenslade remarks in his essay, "Affairs of State", a "ready-made audience for Hobbes' *Leviathan*". Nearly all of the contributors note Hobbes's influence on Rochester, and Barbara Everett makes it the centre-piece of her interesting essay, "The Sense of Nothing". She detects, in all Rochester's poems, a deliberate hollowing beneath the facade, "what medicine calls a shadow behind the heart". But there is more to Rochester than versified Hobbes; and Porter, while agreeing that "Rochester's special quality as a poet is his presentation of Nothing", can also assert with cool hyperbole that "Rochester's songs are 'the finest lyrics between Shakespeare and W. H. Auden'".

Such judgments lean heavily on the doctory-work of bibliography since, with a truly aristocratic disregard for regularity, Rochester left his poems in a scatter of drafts and fragments. As Treglow remarks, "Considering how distinctive a tone of voice Rochester is, he is generally thought to be 'let's surprising how many other people's voices have been mistaken for it.' This being so, the contributors to this volume are rather grudging about David Vell's achievement in providing us with an unexpurgated edition of *The Complete Poems*. Both Everett and Raman Selden object to Vell's adoption of a modern style of typography; and Everett even seems to hanker after the under-the-counter editorial style of the old Muses Library edition in which the naughty bits – or at least the less explicit of them – were buried among the notes at the back of the book. The resulting lacunae represented a literalization of Rochester's celebration of nothing by indicating places in the text where "the poet's skilful on the thin ice of obscenity has fallen off".

Sarah Wintle examines Rochester's male libertinism from the standpoint of modern female liberation. Rochester rejected one conventional view of females should be sexually active and passive – but replaced it with another. His poems, cock-hungry women who find more men so inadequate that Signor Dildo is their lord. Rochester finds nothing disturbing about such appetites in themselves, for as he observes, "there's something general in mere lust". But Wintle detects a certain anxiety at the threat to the social order posed by the tacitly indiscriminate of female passion.

The volume concludes with two essays which discuss Rochester's reimaginings with Dryden and Shadwell, a "hedge-hopping" commentary on *An Allusion to Horace* Pat Rogers notes that "dry-bob" – Rochester's epithet for Dryden – refers not only to colour without emulsion but also to "a thin that does not break the skin" (OED). Selden further reminds us that Dryden is a character in Shadwell's play *Humourist* (1671), "a concealed poet who prides himself on his 'wit and 'Roperties'". Selden suggests that Rochester may have been some sympathetic towards Shadwell that has yet been realized. "That there should be some affinity between an aristocratic court wit and a bourgeois moralist seems of first unlikely," he admits. But the link is to be found in that famous ease with which both men prided themselves on writing. "Men of quality," boasted Shadwell, "that write for their pleasure will not trouble themselves with exactness in their plays." He shrugged off the fault in the play *The Sullen Lovers* by claiming that the whole thing had been written in five weeks. "In those few hours snatched from friends and wine," Selden suggests, that Rochester saw in Shadwell a fellow-amateur, unlike the laborious professional, Dryden.

Something of this attitude of ease permeates this volume, not that the essays are either smugly or careless, but they are generally unimpressive: people have flogged themselves almost to death, but she they drop a remark which makes one wonder whether it has been made at all, after all we see it at the theatre. The first play we see it at the theatre is the first play that counts. "In the first place," Selden assumes that plays are "seen" in the mind's eye, and then that the picture does not come from the mind's eye to the stage, but from the stage to the mind's eye, that is, not just

THEATRE

Benevolence and beneath

Nicholas Grene

STANLEY WEINTRAUB (Editor)

The Playwright and the Pirate: Bernard Shaw and Frank Harris, A Correspondence

273pp. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe. £11.50.
0 85140 131 X

STANLEY WEINTRAUB

The Unexpected Shaw: Biographical Approaches to G. B. S. and His Work

254pp. New York: Unger. \$22.50.
0 8044 2974 X

The stocks of Shaw show no sign of running out before the year 2000. The letters in particular seem all but inexhaustible. Only two of the four volumes of Dan H. Laurence's edition of the *Collected Letters* have yet been published and, though each volume runs to some 900 pages, it represents no more than a restricted sample of the extant material. The individual correspondences continue to appear separately. Last year it was a collection of the letters with Lord Alfred Douglas; this time, equally impressively, it is Frank Harris.

The connection began in 1895 when Harris took over the *Saturday Review* and engaged Shaw as his drama critic. It was Harris's most successful editorship and the culmination of Shaw's work as a critic. In 1898 when Shaw retired from full-time journalism and Harris sold the *Saturday Review*, their working association came to an end. There are no letters from this period and no sign that they had become close friends; Shaw disliked the bibulous Moody luncheon at the Café Royal which Harris gave for *Saturday Review* contributors and had little time for the Frank Harris atmosphere of "brag and bawdry". They remained only very sporadically in touch until 1915 when Harris, by then permanently out of England with a scabrous financial and editorial record behind him, had become even

more notorious for his pro-German stand in the war. Shaw, who did not share Harris's antihumanism for Germany but who had inside himself unpopular enough with his pamphlet *Common Sense about the War* in 1914, wrote to the *New Statesman* to deplore the abuse poured out on Harris. The incident served to re-open the correspondence between the two.

The bulk of the letters in *The Playwright and the Pirate* (Shaw frequently referred to Harris as a buccannery sailing the Spanish Main) are drawn from two periods: 1915 to 1923 when Harris was editing the left-wing *Pearson's Magazine* in New York, and 1923 to 1931 when, increasingly ill and desperate for money, he lived in France off anything that turned up. The letters from Harris are more or less veiled requests to the rich and famous Shaw for help. The help came in the form of the letters back, in many cases cashed in by instant publication. Harris sent Shaw a copy of his two-volume *Oscar Wilde: His Life and Confessions* for comment; the long reply was incorporated into the book as an appendix. Similarly Shaw's response to Harris's sketch of him in *Contemporary Portraits* was included as "How Frank Ought to Have Done It". Shaw's letters on Jesus, war indemnities, A.E. (George Russell) appeared as a matter of course in the next issue of *Pearson's*. There were limits to what Shaw would do for Harris: he would not lend him money, he would not lend his of anything to a projected film on the life of Wilde, nor to any of the other fantastic money-making schemes dreamed up by the unfortunate Harris in his last years. But his letters, and the time it took to write them, he gave freely and with full knowledge of their market value. He even authorized, though reluctantly, the use of the letters in the biography of him which was Harris's last attempt to retrieve his fortunes; and when Harris died before the book was out, leaving his widow very hard-up, Shaw saw it through the press himself and contributed an epilogue.

We cannot expect from all of this the intimate revelations of a private life. Harris was not one career but two, simultaneous but co-ordinate plans. On the imaginative plane the inevitable generosity of his transports of indignation, scorn, pity, civility, and defiance of snobberies, powers, and principles enabled him to retain

friendship. Shaw knew that Harris would publish most of what he wrote, and in fact a majority of the letters in *The Playwright and the Pirate* did appear in print one way or another. Stanley Weintraub, however, has gone back to the original manuscripts which possible and has noted the changes made in the printed texts. With his introduction and the informative headnotes supplied to each letter, it is possible to follow through the whole sequence of the bizarre relationship. It makes for very lively reading in which not all the good lines are Shaw's. Harris was capable of a hard-hitting metaphor – "it is the gloss of hypocrisy over everything in England that I dislike as I dislike the congealed grease of bad cooking" – and could characterize his own style as "journalist with unconscious irony: words like clothes must not be too close to facts or they become stiff and ungraceful". Harris's words were flowing enough to involve him in innumerable libel suits. Professor Weintraub sums up the relationship as "less than a friendship, but undeniably by any other name", and one of the effects of reading the correspondence is to make one speculate on the nature of the bond between the two. There can be no questioning the loyalty of Shaw to the impossible Harris who "quarrelled with everybody but Shakespeare", but one may wonder what lay behind it. It seems unlikely that Shaw felt he owed Harris anything for his employment on the *Saturday Review*; he was not one for the sentimentalities of Auld Lang Syne. There was some genuine admiration and affection in his feeling for Harris with all his "ruffianism". This is suggested as much in his hilarious send-up of the Harris style – "How I Discovered Frank Harris" – as in the formal tribute after his death:

He really had not one career but two, simultaneous but co-ordinate plans. On the imaginative plane the inevitable generosity of his transports of indignation, scorn, pity, civility, and defiance of snobberies, powers, and principles enabled him to retain

Two of the worries expressed by Harriet Hawkins are that much Shakespeare criticism is tendentious and reductive, and that no one reads it except other professional critics. As it happens, there are a few essays in this volume which might remedy this. These are theatre-historical pieces with no ambitions to explain what the plays "mean" but only to give an account of stage interpretations, with the result that they do not ignore their dramatic life. Studying the differences among actors also throws the plays open critically. Thus Simon Williams in his article, "On Shakespearean production at the Burgtheater in Vienna gives a revealing account of a nineteenth-century Antony in *Julius Caesar*. Apparently Antony had always been seen as "a genial popular leader, who suddenly finds himself, half against his will, a key figure in the power struggle of Roman politics". The actor Kaim presented him instead as "a cynical and ruthless manipulator, a malign figure... bent on using the unstable political situation to satisfy his own ambitions". In the forum scene, instead of delivering the speech to the usual jury, extempore, he made it clear that he had in reality prepared, carefully building up the analogy between actor and demagogue. At last, when he had the mob in his hand, he made a clinching gesture, flinging his toga over his shoulder; and "the colour of the toga was royal purple". The literary criticism which Harriet Hawkins does admires (in my opinion, rightly) is that which does not necessarily answer questions, but which poses them "correctly". The possibilities that 400 years of Shakespearean production have thrown up could help to shape and flesh out these questions – and without, in the process, bypassing the non-professional critic.

There are critical approaches represented in this volume which, almost by definition, have little to do with "seeing" the play at all – for example, Bruce Edlich's essay on "mediation" in two of the comedies, which sets up for *The Merchant of Venice* a Lévi-Straussian "matrix" in order to sleave out (if a matrix can sieve) certain Nature/Culture oppositions corresponding (so he believes) to a confusion/harmony contradiction in Elizabethan society. This compressed summary does not do justice to his complicated and ingenious technique but it is clear that his approach seeks to see the play as a person reflecting after the event, and not as a spectator. The same goes for Bryan Loughery and Neil Taylor in an article about the chess game in *The Tempest*, though they arrive at their conclusions more lucidly. If you say "the chess scene... presents in miniature the pattern of the entire play" you're not thinking so much of how the play comes over in performance (unless parodying them – we are to imagine a director setting the whole thing on a chess-board), but rather of the play as an artefact or a structure.

But even the more mainstream essays such as Elizabeth M. Yearling's "Language, theme, and character in *Twelfth Night*", or Joan Sainsbury's "Characterization of the four young lovers in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*", stand a little to one side of the characters as seen in performance. Shakespeare's syntax, vocabulary and images (all of course indispensable to themselves) are somehow treated as self-sufficient stand-ins for them. Joan Sainsbury's article, for example, "The great deal is made to hang on 'thou' and 'you' forms which, in performance, could only ever have performance could only ever have been a tiny part of the whole. On the other hand, Yearling can't seem to get on with the play that counts. "In the first place," Sainsbury assumes that plays are "seen" in the mind's eye, and then that the picture does not come from the mind's eye to the stage, but from the stage to the mind's eye, that is, not just

the regardful those who had the same sympathies. But on the prosaic plane of everyday life he got into difficulties and incurred mal-editions from which it was not always possible to defend him.

However, Weintraub suggests that in Shaw's support for his less successful former colleague there may have been an "unconscious desire... for basking in his hard won self-esteem", even "an element of unrecognized cruelty in the underside of conceiving of any generosity wholly untainted with egotism. But what commands respect in Shaw's attitude to Harris is his consistent refusal merely to be kind to him. His frequent merciless blasts in the letters accord Harris the compliment of treating him as an equal, demanding from his literary work the exacting standards he demanded of himself.

The collection is interesting finally for what it reveals about what Shaw felt could be revealed about a writer. For all the supposed intimacies of *My Life and Loves*, Shaw wrote to Harris, "you don't really give yourself away as Rousseau did". For Shaw autobiography was the art of giving oneself away, an art in which he claimed some skill. Certainly the letter expressing what Harris in his biography insisted on calling Shaw's "sex credo" is remarkably candid for one so normally reticent on sexual matters, though still not frank enough for Frank. But Shaw was also well aware that the capacity for public self-exposure was a dramatist's gift of illusion. "The inner life has no place in individual portraits because it is not an individual thing; it drives me as it drives everyone else. The portrait must give the accidents of the surface, the idiosyncrasies of the vehicle; that is why I am able to give them away with so much detachment." This is why Shaw, egotistical and omniscient as he always appeared, yet claimed for himself a Kantian negative capability. "I am of the true Shakespearean type: I understand everybody and everything and am nobody and nothing."

Anyone trying to define that "nobody and nothing" is bound to face formidable competition. "Everything about me that is of the smallest public interest," declared Shaw, "has been told, and very well told by myself." Certainly he half-got-wrote Harris's life of him, and supplied the bulk of the information for Archibald Henderson's three indigestible volumes, for the very readable popular biography by Hesketh Pearson, and for the violently dogmatic life by St. John Ervine. It remains to be seen what Michael Holroyd, Shaw's current biographer, who has the full benefit of all the papers, will do towards getting past the Shawian persona. In Weintraub's collection of articles, essays and introductions (including the introduction to *The Playwright and the Pirate*) published over the last twenty-five years, he tries to come at The

Unexpected Shaw through the examination of a variety of lesser-known aspects of his life and work. Shaw's music and drama criticism, for instance, are famous; Weintraub investigates the relatively obscure art criticism and book reviews. Shaw's work in the theatre as critic, playwright and director has been the subject of minute study; Weintraub fills us in on Shaw's careers as traced for several of the plays: *You Never Can Tell*, *Cosmos* and *Cleopatra*, *Capitain Brassbound*, *Major Barbara*, *Heartbreak House* and *Saint Joan*. There are essays on Shaw's interest in boxing (the subject of a full-length study by Benny Greon), on the development of his attitude to Irish nationalism, his relationship with Sean O'Casey, the plan for a play about the Unknown Soldier which he pondered for several years but never wrote. There are efforts to counteract Shaw's dated reputation by identifying avant-garde elements in his dramaturgy and linking him with inter playwrights.

In all of this Weintraub uses his domed knowledge of the Shawian canon and the Shaw archives in good effect. There are occasional slips which in Irish reviewer is bound to notice. It is not an officer of the Irish Citizen Army but of the Volunteers – Padraig Pearse no less – whose words are heard through the pub window in *The Plough and the Stars*. The poem is important enough for the play and for O'Casey, a former secretary of the ICA, to be worth correcting. And to suggest that in O'Casey's *Captain Boyle* we may have "a genial parody of *Heartbreak House*'s Captain Shove" seems a case of the Shawian scholar's professional deformation. Curiously Weintraub does not mention the very obvious link between *Heartbreak House* and *The Plough and the Stars*, the fact that they both end to the strains of "Keep the Home Fires Burning".

Elsewhere, however, the thorough investigation of sources does provide an illuminating context for the plays. It is interesting to learn that characters who seem so entirely creatures of the Shawian imagination – the Caesar of *Caesar* and *Cleopatra*, Lady Cicely Waynflete, Andrew Undershaft – had other origins. And yet so often with the study of sources, the final effect is to reinforce the sense of the dramatist's creativity. Shaw may have been influenced by Mommsen in his creation of Caesar, but he remains unmistakably Shaw's Caesar. Undershaft may have had aspects of Nobel or Krupp but in the last analysis he is pure Shaw. The overall effect of *The Unexpected Shaw* is inevitably somewhat miscellaneous; although the individual essays were revised and expanded for the collection it was clearly impossible to give them the coherence of a unified theme or direction. On the unexpected Shaw, as one might expect, it is Shaw who has the last word: "All that can be predicted of him is unexpectedness."

Full repertoire

Keir Elam

MASOLINO D'AMICO

Dieci secoli di teatro inglese 970-1980
462pp. Milan: Mondadori. L. 7,000.
01 0019789 7

The appearance of this simple and enjoyable survey is a tribute to the maturity of English theatre studies in Italy. Masolino D'Amico's synthetic account of theatrical and dramatic events from the *Queen's* *quarrels* to *The Railway in Britain* is as informative and as readable as any one-volume history currently available. Particularly valuable is the judiciously balanced assessment of changing relations between performance conditions and dramatic form, and in this respect the richest chapters are those concerning periods often passed over rapidly in panoramas of this kind: the pre-Restoration and the Romantic-Victorian. The author's reappraisal of the nineteenth century as an era rich in popular drama, and marked by considerable

innovation in theatrical and performance structures, represents a welcome departure from the customary condemnations based solely on the scarcity of minor texts, and indeed proves more satisfactory than the final chapter on twentieth-century drama, which seems to dwell on the written drama. Perhaps inevitable, a certain embarrassment is betrayed in the attempts to sort out the minge of contradictory tendencies among recent dramatists, and at times here description gives way to hurried judgement (Edward Bond, for example, is presented as a secker after sensational grand guignol effects) or awkward groupings (Ayckbourn and Stoppard yoked together as "virtuosi").

But in the main this compact history displays some of the strengths of the *chiese* *Storia del teatro drammatico* di D'Amico's grandfather, Silvio D'Amico: considerable power of synthesis and a captivating narrative line in recounting broad developments without the loss of particularizing detail.

The orthodox approach

Brian Morton

CHAIM BERMANT

The House of Women
250pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£7.50.
0 297 78203 7

On the face of it, Chaim Bermant's new novel is conventional, even pedestrian. Courlander is an agnostic Jew of Baltic (or possibly Polish) origin. Married to an all-but invisible woman with no family ties of her own, he begs four daughters, but not the son who will carry forward the line or the name he has defended against British xenophobia and the axioms of his uncles - who take cover behind more Saxon surnames. Courlander's Jewishness, though, only emerges in adversity; his conception of heritage is obdurately secular.

As is that of the narrator, Henrietta, known as Ducks, the second and most complex of the four daughters. They are all beautiful, intelligent in one way or another, and highly sexed; it remains unclear whether the offhand treatment of the girls' varied and tortuous sexual experiences - bucolic, kinky, briskly functional - is an affectionate of Henrietta's or a symptom of Bermant's unease in dealing with women's perceptions. Henrietta is obviously not quite the ugly duckling of her nickname; much is made of her spectacular physical attributes: the complications of her emotional life, including an academic career much like Bermant's own, are

somehow contrived to give her a perspective on her family - the "house" - and its history.

Henrietta's fate is to find partners for her sisters. Each of her lovers swiftly transfers his affections to Vesta, Vida, Rocky and to her friend Grace. There are hints of incestuous passion and there is every suggestion that Henrietta, like Grace, has never moved beyond an Electra-like desire for her father. Intimations of that sort, and a mythic apparatus, hover just beneath the surface.

Courlander, it can be said, becomes the book's central character, the real focus of his daughter's attention. To generalize greatly from a novel which offers no discernible message, *The House of Women* is about the search for identity: personal, racial, historical. Courlander is gradually drawn back into "the Jewish experience", though it is never clear whether his daughters see this as a positive move or merely a consolation for unhappiness and the limited satisfactions of worldly success. One by one, his daughters explore their racial past; marrying Jews, visiting Israel, turning *kosher*, embarking as Henrietta does on scholarly examinations of the old country. Courlander is reminded, to the girls' former governess, Tilly, a woman who raises mysterious letters in Hebrew (and is therefore suspect to the middle-class up-Orthodox) and who, in her forty-fifth year, delivers the "miracle child" Josh who - as the echo of *Deuteronomy* suggests - leads the family back to Israel.

If Courlander rediscovers the need

for spiritual search, however, Bermant does not contrive a Biblical climax. Courlander traces his roots back to the Admor of Ploisk (L'atvin? Pomranitz?) but he and his children inhabit a world which is unmitigatedly modern. The Heifa and Tel Aviv they visit are bustling commercial centres; the *kibbutzim* are sexual adventures; the Promised Land is a nuclear Power and a political flashpoint. Josh is wounded in the Yom Kippur war and Courlander suffers a stroke which paralyzes one side of his body.

Only physical disability and financial ruin resolve Courlander's struggle with life. He settles down as a grace-and-favour resident of a *kibbutz* which, he is told, is fully mechanized, no longer dependent on youth and stamina. Israel, Bermant suggests, is no longer a place of refuge or racial destiny, unimplicated in the modern world. Even anti-semitic jokes such as Henrietta's obsession with economics (and specifically the nineteenth-century Baltic timber trade) make that same point.

The House of Women is unfashionably well-made, with "believable" rounded characters and a wholly "unliterary" style. But although it is untouched by modernist techniques, the novel is scarcely as cosily domestic as its blurb suggests. The sexual episodes are unsentimental and often hectic; images of disfigurement and dismemberment are too frequent to be ignored. Despite this, and a somewhat overworked plot marked by coincidence, Chaim Bermant has written a humane and humanistic account of Jews in a secular world.

Against all obstacles

Robert Brain

SUE McCaULEY

Other Helves
254pp. Hodder and Stoughton.
£6.95.
0 340 279915

Where have all the fine romances gone? I suspect they have lost their raison d'être. Today's permissive ethic has stannolled the bumpy road to love, blunting the edgy excitement created by the old taboos. Perhaps we can hope for something different once the New Celibacy becomes established. The ogre of "new" venereal diseases, rather than traditional morel and religious sanctions against fornication, may inspire a renaissance of romantic fiction based on unrequited love.

Meanwhile, from New Zealand we have in *Other Helves* a very good love story with its fair share of old and new-fashioned murders. Liz, the heroine, is a middle-class housewife from Auckland's leafy suburbs. Tug, the hero, is a petty thief and aspiring mugger from the inner city. She is a White New Zealander, a Pakahua. He is a Black, a Maori; beautiful, sexy and sixteen years old. She has rather given up sex and laments to herself that Tug was not even born when people, for a time, considered her pretty.

At the beginning of this romantic obstacle-race, Liz quietly resigns from her job as wife, housewife and mother and takes a well-earned rest at Valleyfields, a home for the mentally disturbed. Here we first encounter some of Sue McCauley's well-drawn minor characters. Liz meets Tug - dumped there in desperation by welfare officers - between the sheets of her next-door neighbour. They become friends. Later, having escaped from Valleyfields, they set up home together. Later still they make love. Still later they fall in love. Their relationship is presented movingly and divertingly against two colourful backgrounds: first Auckland's inner city, then a hippy community on New Zealand's North Island.

This is no sentimental tale, nor an ascetic *Lolita* stood on its head. We follow this ostensibly ill-assorted

couple as they cope with the differences in age, colour and race. The greatest difficulty is the prejudice against Tug and all his friends, Black and white, which results from a heavy backlog of poverty, deprivation and hopelessness. Liz joins Tug and his friends in the jungle of the inner city world which comes as more of a cultural shock to the heroine than any real head-hunters' jungle to any anthropologist.

Other Helves is not only a good love story but also good anthropology. More convincingly than any other, anthropologist McCauley lets us into the squalid nooks and crannies of a city which has as much physical and moral decay as Chicago, Sydney or Liverpool. International street-corner society (the dramatic obverse of the more glamorous and novel-worthy set society) has rarely been observed so amusingly or been described so well. We get to know young hookers and hustlers, junkies and muggers; and we see them close-up, in their confrontations and frustrating confrontations with judge, welfare officer, social worker, prospective employer. Miraculously at the end of the book these head-buses of our urban jungles have become recognizable human beings.

So that their love can survive Tug and Liz migrate from Auckland to the relaxed hippy world of Wai Bay on the North Island. Tug is thus saved from his friends' fate (prison, beatings, drug-addiction, suicide) only to be the real protagonist of their relationship. Liz at first attempts to take everything into her own older, white hands. She becomes Tug's spouse (*de facto*) for economic purposes, then his mother (legal guardian) for social purposes. In the end it is the sixteen-year-old who turns out to be the backbone and redeemer both of the relationship and of the novel: Tug the Maori, is no My Dark Lady, no *Exotic Dolittle*, pleased to shed her own culture to win the approval of her superior lover and the rewards of bourgeois society. Tug rejects the dialect, the clothes, the security and morality of Liz's New Zealand, and steadfastly ignores the pitfalls of his way by the various "establishments". It is just reward that this New Zealand novel has won New Zealand's counterpart of the Booker prize, the James Wattle Book of the Year Award.

The rituals of romance

Mary Kathleen Benet

JUNE BURNETT

Hélène Bébé
266pp. Blond and Briggs. £7.95.
0 85634 129 0

June Burnett's heroine Hélène is the offspring of a rich Haitian, mulatto family; signs and portents indicate that she is born under the special protection of the white snake god Damballah-Wedo. A mixture of civilized modernity and ancient magic, she manages to hang onto her virginity through an entire degree course at Berkeley, only to lose it with a vengeance when she gets back to her native island. Her Berkeley tutor Alex reappears and hopes to profit from her new well-being.

The star-crossed lovers have enemies, though: Hélène's wicked aunt Maria, who snorts cocaine and murders young men who fail to please her in bed; Du-Plan, an unfringed priest turned voodoo sorcerer, who makes Hélène his sex slave and accomplice; Delorga, henchman of Papa Doc, who intends to take Hélène in marriage as payment for helping her father out of an embarrassing scandal. Alex, too, is in trouble - he has got himself into a gun-running plot that involves Maria's drugs and Delorga's revolutionary son.

Worst of all, the characters are in constant danger of being washed by heavy lumbering prose. "Everyone would by now have formed ideas which would in the days ahead need only the sustaining saliva of well-oiled tongues to become a gross mutation." By the time we read this, the plot itself is

becoming a gross mutation. At first it seems as if Haiti's disastrous economic, political crises and folk tales are going to be analysed with the tools brought back from Berkeley. A doomed coup d'état is being planned, and Hélène is taking steps to sabotage her arranged marriage. But the story becomes so tangled that only a deity or machine can resolve it, and there is a hand in the form of voodoo. Delorga invests Hélène with his own powers, and she puts them to devastating use. How and why do they? Nobody knows and it seems nobody much cares; murder by magic is accepted as easily as the real thing. Bodies are dismembered and fed to pigs; ritually consumed by voodoo altars, mown down by machine-guns and flame-throwers. No wonder the people of the island go around in a drugged trance; it enables them to calmly through events that would unhinge the average gingo.

The lurid set-pieces - voodoo rituals, copulations, torture - carry more impact than the fuzzy forays into history and politics. And enough of the language is hurled around to create some vivid images. Mirrored sunglasses glitter like all-seeing eyes; Stravinsky's music hangs in the room, sliced in small morsels by the fan. But the bottom is laid out too thickly to disturb; the very richness of the language is the cause of its disturbing. Behind it all, for some reason it's pleasing that there is a "hand" in the border. Where the sadistic photographic fantasies are concerned, the multicoloured can be complemented by seventy black and white photographs. No harm in imagining such a thing that is the kind of place you'd like to imagine; but why call it Haiti?

Abstraction as realism

John E. Bowlit

LARISSA A. ZHADOVA

Malevich: Suprematism and Revolution in Russian Art 1910-1930
Translated by Alexander Lieven
371pp with 445 illustrations, 84 in colour. Thames and Hudson, £20.
0 500 09147 1

This is the first monograph on Kazimir Severinovich Malevich (1878-1935) by a Soviet art historian; and it is a clear indication that the Russian avant-garde, long maligned and misrepresented in Soviet scholarship, is being rehabilitated or, at least, reconsidered. The late Larissa Zhadova was a distinguished art historian, who had access to much archival material and who had written widely on various aspects of modern Russian art. Consequently, we would be justified in expecting her book on Malevich to be a mine of information as well as an enlightening treatise on the history of the Russian avant-garde. Unfortunately, this is not quite the case.

Malevich is the English translation of the original German edition that appeared in 1978 under the title *Suche und Experiment: Aus der Geschichte der russischen und sowjetischen Kunst zwischen 1910 und 1930*. Although the English title implies that this is a study exclusively devoted to Malevich, it would be more accurate to regard it as a discussion of the Russian avant-garde in general with emphasis on the abstract work of Malevich. In fact, Zhadova presents little new material on Malevich himself, although she does provide new and valuable information on the other aspects of the Russian avant-garde: on, for instance, the activities of the younger generation of Suprematists just after 1917 as well as on the application of Suprematist ideas to architecture and decoration in the fields of architecture and clothes, book design and jewellery.

Zhadova divides her study into three main sections - a discussion of experimental Russian art in the 1910s and 1920s with particular reference to Malevich; a collection of various articles (most of them published in the 1920s) dealing with the Russian avant-garde; and a selection of illustrations, many of which have not been reproduced before. Undoubtedly, this last section is the

most useful since it brings to light a number of works long thought to have been lost or which have lain concealed in the storehouses of Soviet museums for more than fifty years. Of particular interest are the unfamiliar works by colleagues and students of Malevich such as Lazar Khidkeid, Nins Kogan and Lev Yudin. The illustrative section also contains documentary photographs of artists, of art works on display in the major cities just after 1917, of art studios and institutes, and of rare books and periodicals.

Zhadova begins with an examination of the early stage of Malevich's career, including his response to Impressionism, but without reference to his Symbolist orientation or that of his colleagues such as Ivan Kliun and Alexander Rodchenko. In fact, there are many vestiges of the style *moderne* in Malevich's paintings and graphic designs of about 1907 and he was fascinated by the ideas of the Russian Symbolist writers and artists. According to the inscription on a painting in the Russian Museum, Leningrad, he even submitted a work to the *Blue Rose* exhibition of Symbolist painters in Moscow in 1907; it was rejected by the jury. The parallels between Malevich's Suprematist system and the worldview of Symbolists such as Vladimir Soloviev and Andrei Bely deserve serious investigation, but Zhadova ignores them.

While in general her discussion is clear and straightforward, it adds little to the information already available in Western sources. We read of Malevich's contributions to avant-garde exhibitions, such as the "Knaev of Diamonds", the "Donkey's Tail", "Tramway V" and "O.10", of his set and costume designs for the opera *Victory over the Sun* in 1913, of his "translational" works of 1913-14, and of his invention of Suprematism, "the new painterly Realism". In 1915, berated by his creation of the famous "Black Square". Unfortunately, as Zhadova admits, her book went to press before she managed to consult the correspondence between Malevich and Marius (published by Evgenii Kovtun in 1976) and, as a result, her analysis of the concept of Suprematism lacks important documentation.

However, Zhadova's description of the avant-garde at the time of the Revolution is illuminating. For example, she provides new information on the endeavour to establish a society and journal called

International of the Arts within the Visual Arts Section of the Commissariat for Enlightenment, in order to link it with the political and cultural "internationalism" of the late 1910s and 1920s. Zhadova also presents much new material on Malevich's stay in Vitebsk (1919-22) and on his connections with Lita Chashnik, El Lissitzky, Nikolai Suetin and others there, though she makes no reference to the several Western publications on the subject, such as the three catalogues of recent Chashnik exhibitions in Europe and America, and fails to mention that the greater part of Chashnik's oeuvre is now in the West. Even so, her account of the Vitebsk period is accurate and detailed, and it includes a much needed chronology of artistic events which took place there, excerpts from the Suprematist journals *Unovis* and *Pri Unovis* and a description of the structure and accomplishments of the Vitebsk Popular Art Institute where Malevich and his group were based. Justifiably, Zhadova regards the theoretical and practical experiments at Vitebsk, especially by Chashnik, Lissitzky and Malevich, as the beginning of their attempts to apply Suprematist ideas to utilitarian ends, but is also quick to point out that even before Vitebsk, Malevich - as well as Olga Rozanova, Liubov Popova and others - expressed a particular interest in "applied Suprematism", producing abstract designs for embroideries, book covers, textiles and even for porcelain. In spite of a dearth of documentary materials (much of the *Unovis* archive was destroyed during the Second World War), Zhadova undertook painstaking research in order to reconstruct this phase of the avant-garde and she should be congratulated on this aspect of her work.

Also of value is her attention to Malevich's late period (late 1920s to 1935); a period that some historians of the Russian avant-garde tend to underestimate. Towards the end of his life Malevich returned to a figurative style, producing portraits of members of his family and of his friends as well as curious landscapes inhabited by faceless peasants who are sometimes reminiscent of De Chirico's Surrealist figures. Zhadova refers here to the influence on these portraits of works by Francis and Holbein, although she does not explain whether this was conscious or unconscious.

Malevich is not truly indicative of Zhadova's capabilities, as an art

historian. Her recent articles on Chashnik, Mikhail Matiushin and Vladimir Tatlin were much more convincing, and one senses that she was constrained here by both ideological and commercial considerations. Particularly irritating is her almost total disregard of relevant Western publications - a serious lacuna as the first scholarly Soviet article on Malevich since 1929 was published only in 1975 (by the late Konstantin Simonov, Zhadova's husband) whereas Western historians have been writing regularly on Malevich and on the Russian avant-garde in general since the early 1960s (for example Camilla Gray in *The Great Experiment: Russian Art 1863-1922*, 1962). Zhadova also omits to mention the official Soviet attitude towards the avant-garde and the vilifications of Malevich in the Soviet press from the 1930s until the end of the 1960s.

As for the factual mistakes and misrepresentations here, these should have been corrected in the English edition: Lurionov created his first Rayonist works in 1912 not 1911; Chashnik and Lissitzky were already in Vitebsk when Malevich arrived there in 1919; the painting reproduced as illustration No 56 and described as

belonging to the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, was sold by the Soviets through a London bank in 1978 (something of which Zhadova was quite aware); there is no mention of the main text by Grigori Zinoviev in the pamphlet for the Congress of Committees on Rural Poverty (1918). Above all, there is scarcely any attempt to present a contextual, international discussion of Malevich and the Russian avant-garde vis-à-vis the connections with Western Symbolism, Cubism, Futurism, De Stijl, and Purism. In general, the English translation reads smoothly, although there are some misleading renderings: the word *zhivichnost* would be better translated as "architecture" rather than as "construction"; Kogan is a woman, not a man; GAKhN should be translated as "State Academy of Artistic Sciences" rather than "State Academy of Arts".

In spite of the book's shortcomings, Zhadova has made a valuable contribution to our wider appreciation of modern Russian art. It is to be regretted that her premature death has deprived us of other studies which might have been more serious and complete.

The heroic dimension

Georg Eisler

SHARON L. HIRSH

Ferdinand Hodler
144pp. with colour and black-white illustrations. Thames and Hudson.
£24.
0 500 09157 9

With the re-birth of interest in Symbolism as an integral part of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century art, there has been a wider recognition of the Swiss painter, Ferdinand Hodler, whose work is associated with Viennese Art Nouveau - it was often exhibited with, and influenced the work of Klimt, Moser and the artist-designers of the Secession.

Hodler frequently chose heroic and patriotic subjects; and two of his paintings have become popular images: the massive and truer "Wilhelm Tell", his right hand raised in a threatening gesture, the left holding the crossbow (which itself has become a Swiss national emblem). Tell's face, with its expression of defiance and anger, is in fact a self-portrait. The other is "The Woodcutter", who unleashes his violence in one dramatic blow. This image was conceived to decorate a Swiss bank-note as a symbol of energy and strength, but it reveals an element of almost hysterical aggression and emotional involvement. A similar image reappears in the posters of the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1919; in the violent gesture taken on a new meaning. Hodler's influence was felt far afield as the Soviet Union. In the posters and anguished of the marching Red Guards, Denis's "Defence of Petrograd" (1927) echoes Hodler's "Departure of the Jena Students", painted thirty years earlier.

His contribution to landscape painting is also fresh and innovative. Alpine scenery is interpreted in a manner both dramatic and un-sentimental, and avoids the ponderous kitsch of the tourist poster, which is inherent in the genre. Hodler was always aware of inhospitability and danger; in his paintings the Alps are threatening and inaccessible symbols of impenetrable and cruel Nature; an interpretation of the German romantic Carus's "You are nothing, God is all". This is achieved by a near-cubist breaking up of the crystal-line and jagged alpine forms against cold blue skies.

Facing Hodler's multifigured symbolic paintings, our admiration is tempered by a sense of incomprehensibility. Despite their painterly sensibility and human insight, there occurs an uneasy and sudden shift from the sublime to the ridiculous. The figures are often posturing, displaying a "body language" reminiscent of the

choreography of the "Ausdruckstanz", which featured an elaborate catalogue of stances and movements to mime a whole gamut of emphatic declarations and actions. The black-robed figures escaping from the nude girl in "Truth" (1903) are absurd, demonstrating that symbolism can on occasion become its own parody. Lacking the direct tragic impact of Munch, with his relatively straight-forward choice of symbols, and the decorative opulence of Klimt's huge University Paintings, Hodler's symbolic paintings, rather than "make visible the invisible", often lead to uncomfortable double-entendres. The recurring figures of "Love" (1908), fail to transcend the undoubtedly beautiful rendering of uncoloured models.

As is the case with many of his contemporaries, Hodler's incidental, more personal, paintings are better than his ambitious large canvases, and it is to these "secondary" works that one must turn to assess Hodler's considerable stature. The illness and lingering death of his mistress, Valentine Gode-Durel, evoked in the painter the strength and creativity to depict tragedy and personal loss - his many portraits of the dying woman are a moving record of deep involvement and compassion. This is great art without symbolic paraphernalia; Hodler is at his best with uncomplicated subjects: landscapes, portraits, and, in the earlier paintings, working people. His portraits of young women, reflect the artist's self-assurance, contrasting strongly with the much frailer and neurotic beauty of Klimt's ornament-bedecked ladies of Viennese society. Hodler endows his subjects in a painterly yet flat background, with emphasis on the linear aspects of composition and allowing the figure to dominate its environment.

Sharon L. Hirsh, in an otherwise excellent text, occasionally succumbs to subject-matter verbiage to match the subject-matter of the paintings. But this is an excellent introduction to the work of an neglected painter.

Phaidon Press appears to be energetically re-issuing in their Colour Library series and to "revised and enlarged" editions, books originally published in the mid-1970s. Two recent re-issues are by Simon Wilson, a Curator at the Tate Gallery. *Beardsley* (290pp plus forty-eight plates, £12.50, 0 7148 2264 7) follows the usual format in this series: an introductory essay, often illustrated, followed by plates with individual commentaries.

In the same series are Edward Lucie-Smith's *Toulouse-Lautrec* (310pp plus forty-eight colour plates, £12.50, 0 7148 2266 3) and Simon Wilson's *Surrealism* (290pp plus forty-eight colour plates, £12.50, 0 7148 2234 5) originally published in 1976.

Things that go bump

John Melmoth

CHARLES MACLEAN

The Watcher
343pp. Allen Lane. £7.95.
0 7139 1559 5

Among the more engaging observations made by Charles Maclean in *The Wolf Children* (1977) was the bitterness which his fatal charges caused the somewhat ponderous Reverend Singh, whose earnest desire to convey the otherness of children reared as animals betrayed him into risible misconceptions. Maclean's new novel is similarly preoccupied with areas of human experience sufficiently grotesque to expose the limitations of common sense, and similarly resistant to explanation.

The point around which *The Watcher* turns is an act of savagery perpetrated either as a vicious practical joke or as an obscure rite of re-encantment by Martin Gregory, computer salesman, on the occasion of his wife's birthday. The suburban calm of their marriage is shattered by an instant's carnage which has little apparent connection with history or psychology: "There was no warning of any kind. No discernible pattern of events leading up to the incident. No catalyst or precedent." Orthodox notions of causality and, consequently, conventional modes of narration are of little use in the attempt to make sense of this isolated occurrence. Responsibility for the story develops beyond Martin himself who keeps a diary and upon his hypno-therapist, Dr Somerville, who transcribes the tapes of their therapeutic sessions and formulates psychoanalytical explanations. A third, authorial voice occasionally intervenes but does little to untangle the conflicting testimonies of delirium and parano.

Principally in the interest of his wife's safety, Martin is persuaded to undergo regression therapy during which he learns of the sequence of previous incarnations. The tragic and usually brief lives of his forebears contribute significantly to the novel's substance. This sparse of autobiographies, puzzlingly related to both genuine memory and elaborate fantasy (cryptonymia), is directed and shaped by Dr Somerville with a panache that identifies analyst and

author and makes therapy a metaphor for the creative process. Gradually, the events of careers as diverse as that of a sixteenth-century Neapolitan poet and a simple-minded Appalachian hillbilly revivalist preacher born in the 1920s are encouraged to cohere. Recurring themes and shared experiences convince Martin of his mission. The "facts" of regression are assembled into a view of the world which is indistinguishable from the private conceptual high-jinks of a lunatic well-versed in *The Golden Bough*.

The relationship between analysis and enigmatic clinician is particularly problematic. As Martin's attitude develops from initial scepticism through precarious trust to implacable hostility, a vocabulary of resistance and transference gives way to a Manichaean insistence on absolute of Good and Evil. The tension between them is gruesomely dispelled in the bell tower of the Riverside Church, to the accompaniment of the clashing bells of the Rockefeller Memorial Carillon and the climactic strains of *Parafire*. Resolution is achieved in a collation of references which recalls both Victor Hugo and C. S. Lewis.

Paperback fiction

STANISLAW LEM. *Tales of Pirx the Pilot*. 590pp. £4.95. 0 14 0060967 0. Lem is a prolific writer of science fiction, and Pinguin have just published three of his full-length books, translated from Polish, in a single volume. Lem's technological details are not always very convincing, and his characterization is sometimes extremely weak; his vision of America is one of unremitting comic-book ghastliness, while his descriptions of the Russians are so facetious that they are disconcertingly flattering. But at his best his science-fictional imagination manages to combine a fine solidity with high ingenuity. He can render the alien without recourse to the fantastical.

BOTTA WHARTON. *The House of Mirrors*. 333pp. Pinguin. £1.95. 0 14 004942 2. *The House of Mirrors* is the first of a major novel by Edith Wharton, a great middle period during which she wrote *The Custom of the Country* and *The Age of Innocence*. The story of Lily Bart and her fall from wealth in wealthy New York society

comprises a clear-sighted picture of the construction of society with its old families and new rich and of the individual's powerlessness against social consensus. The passage of time has only lessened Lily's attractiveness as a heroine and Wharton's handling of the topic of fashionable immorality seems bold even by today's standards.

G.S. PATRICK HAMILTON. *The Slaves of Solitude*. 342pp. Oxford Paperbacks. £2.95. 0 19 281359 7. First published in 1947, *The Slaves of Solitude* is Hamilton's second novel following *Hangover Square* (1941) and presiding the three Gorge novels and the plays. The novel is set in a dingy Thameside village during the Second World War and has the publisher's reader Miss Roach as its heroine. The Home Front is depicted as a heroic background against which Hamilton can display his characteristic clear-sighted cynicism with a humanistic softening towards the middle-class victims of war. There is an introduction by Claudi Cockburn.

L.D. The lurid set-pieces - voodoo rituals, copulations, torture - carry more impact than the fuzzy forays into history and politics. And enough of the language is hurled around to create some vivid images. Mirrored sunglasses glitter like all-seeing eyes; Stravinsky's music hangs in the room, sliced in small morsels by the fan. But the bottom is laid out too thickly to disturb; the very richness of the language is the cause of its disturbing. Behind it all, for some reason it's pleasing that there is a "hand" in the border. Where the sadistic photographic fantasies are concerned, the multicoloured can be complemented by seventy black and white photographs. No harm in imagining such a thing that is the kind of place you'd like to imagine; but why call it Haiti?

Real republicanism

Norman Hampson

CLAUDE NICOLET

L'idée républicaine en France: Essai d'histoire critique

512pp. Paris: Gallimard. 138fr. 2 07 023096 1

They may not order this thing better in France, but they certainly order it differently. It is impossible to imagine any Englishman writing a philosophical study of this length and nature, about the evolution of Liberalism as it existed at the turn of the century. *C'est magnifique* - it certainly makes the shallowness of political debate in this country look very shabby - but one cannot help wondering whether or not *c'est la guerre*. In the first place, the contrast between the elevation of Claude Nicolet's political theory and the actual conduct of the governments of the Third Republic makes one a little sceptical about the whole exercise. In the second place, despite all his erudition and ingenuity, his argument contains no surprises and what emerges from the old hat is a very familiar rabbit.

It all started with the Revolution, a

historical event that transcended history, nothing less, in fact, than an incarnation, when the Word was made Flesh. This could only have happened in France, and although its universality is an essential part of its message, the republican ideal that forms the subject of the book is a very French affair. Nicolet quotes with obvious approval Gambetta's claim that there is "quelque chose d'essentiellement propre à notre nation, qui aurait la grâce et comme la fleur de la civilisation et du goût, qui serait, - ce qu'on n'a jamais pu nous enlever, - la véritable initiatrice du genre humain", etc. etc. If the ranks of Tuscany can scare for fear to cheer, they are neither expected nor entitled to join in.

Nicolet begins by trying to trace the evolution of this republican ideal, which he believes to have been incarnated in the radical and radical-socialist parties by the end of the nineteenth century. Originating in the Enlightenment, it entered French history with the revolution, only to disappear with Bonaparte's *coup d'état* of 1799. The debate continued throughout the nineteenth century until the goal was gradually achieved under the Third Republic. What was involved was nothing less than basing an entire society on principles that were both scientifically demonstrable

and morally normative. Only with the advent of Positivism was it possible to square that particular circle and Nicolet investigates in some detail how this was done. What has happened since is left rather vague.

Although theoretically capable of encompassing all Frenchmen, Nicolet is most insistent that his republican ideal was the peculiar property of the radicals. He excludes from the fold all those who acknowledged any allegiance to the nation state. That disposes of "ultramontane" Catholicism or socialism. He also rejects the line of argument of Montesquieu, Constant and Tocqueville, that based the freedom of the individual on a contrived balance of political power. This is written off as either monarchist or "Anglo-Saxon". In the second part of the book he tries to work out a defence of this position.

His own liberal credentials are impeccable: he is wholly dedicated to government by consent and hostile to all forms of authoritarianism, especially to the imposition of any kind of intellectual orthodoxy. This creates quite a few difficulties for him, since his political theory rests on Rousseau and on the "classical" definition of freedom as self-absorption in a *polis* of which

one is an active member. Rousseau is made to say that the general will must be just (which presumably implies its accountability to standards external to a particular society) as well as general. As Saint-Just objected in 1791, this was exactly what Rousseau did not say. Whatever he may have intended, his actual definition implied that the general will was concerned only with the interest of the society in which it originated. The whole concept, moreover, unless it is reduced to the vulgar form of pious moralizing, implies that those who challenge the authority of the republic are acting illegitimately and must be "forced to be free". During the French Revolution, republican policies were, in fact, enforced in the name of the general will, irrespective of any evidence that they enjoyed popular support. Nicolet is rather coy about the Terror. Repugnant though it must be to him, it has to be accepted as an integral part of a revolution that he insists is a "bloc". At one point he tries to explain away what he admits were oppressive actions, by saying that "il s'agissait précisément d'actions révolutionnaires, en dehors du pacte constitutionnel." This would not have satisfied Rousseau any more than it would have consoled the victims.

Time and again, the totalitarian implications of "classical" democracy conflict with Nicolet's liberal inclinations. It is all very well to argue that one can elaborate a scientific morality that can be enforced as educational orthodoxy with no more intolerance than suppressing the teaching of the idea that two plus two make five. Religious wars have been fought for less than that. The underlying philosophy justifies and indeed imposes the suppression of dissent when persuasion proves

inadequate. There is no room, as we have seen, for those who divide the allegiance between national and international foci. Nicolet does not seem much concerned about the fact that the general will, as his radical conceived it, was a purely masculine business. He could, of course, limit adult women as citizens - but sexual ones, who would not be allowed to set up femininity as any kind of principle of separate allegiance. He is also evasive about the rights of any sector of the *république une et indivisible*, such as Algerian Moslems, to withdraw from a secular community of which they could never become an integral part. There were plenty of French republicans who supported the Algerian war as a necessary consequence of France's *mission civilisatrice* or regarded it as *œuvre* Vénitien.

This brings us back to the question relating Nicolet's *idée* to the French Republic. He could legitimately say that he is dealing with principles rather than with policies, but an essential part of his argument is the rejection of "metaphysics" and the insistence that his principles are scientifically based on history itself and designed to improve the lives of real men in a real society. If the politicians who claim to be guided by these principles, when they controlled a government of their country, were as conspicuously more enlightened as successful than men of old persuasions - no one is pretending that they were any worse - this would suggest that they had not found the magic key. To hint at anything of the kind is not merely to expose the weakness of one's Anglo-Saxon pragmatism, it was, after all, Montesquieu who thought that "la vertu même a besoin de limites".

Awfully arrayed

Antony Brett-James

GUNTHER E. ROTHENBERG

Napoleon's Great Adversaries: The Archduke Charles and the Austrian Army, 1792-1814

219pp. Batsford. £9.95. 0 7134 3758 8

Of books about the Napoleonic Wars there is no end. Many cover well-trodden ground, but very little has been written in English about the nature and achievements of the Austrian army in the long struggle. So Gunther E. Rothenberg's study fills a definite gap. The title is somewhat misleading, but is explained by the fact that Habsburg Austria, despite repeated defeats, despite the occupation of its capital, Vienna, on two occasions, and despite the loss of large areas of territory, remained the most determined and implacable of Napoleon's continental opponents, campaigning against his armies for over thirteen years.

Professor Rothenberg shows how, time and again, the junior officers and other ranks fought with courage, fortitude and professionalism, whereas the high command and senior officers were cautious rather than enterprising, unduly concerned with preserving the army, and hoping to avoid defeat instead of seeking to achieve a decisive victory. Too often the Emperor and his ministers plunged into war before the army was ready to take the field. Communications were poor. An overall plan of operations was frequently lacking. Above all, the army was beset by a bitterly factionalized high command, whose conduct of war can charitably be described as erratic.

After each disastrous campaign strenuous efforts were made to reform the military establishment. Prominent as a reformer was the Archduke Charles, a slight figure barely five feet tall, who was plagued by mild epileptic fits, yet had the ability to inspire his troops. Despite his immense prestige and popularity he became the target for vicious intrigues - even the Emperor had him spied on - and

during the period of reform in 1809 efforts to undermine Charles's position seriously hampered any coherent programme to rebuild the army. Notwithstanding some impressive gains in the administration, the training and the fighting elements, the army remained slow-moving and incoherent, never match the French in manoeuvre and in forging a link between the military and the civil society and state, and of course the Habsburg army reflected the society it served.

Even in 1809 the army was not well prepared for war. Despite this, Charles inflicted at Aspern-Essling a tactical reverse on Napoleon, though refusing to take risks he failed to exploit his success. At Wagram, though defeated, he made the most of a heavy price in casualties and denied to Napoleon the complete victory he needed. Rothenberg indicates clearly that Charles, although at his peak as a field commander in 1809, was by no means a great being, because he blamed his subordinates and even his gallant troops for letting him down at Wagram. Napoleon thought the Archduke had failed to train his troops to handle independent commands, and he made their life still more difficult by his secretiveness, the ambiguity of his orders and the lack of discretion allowed them. After 1809, the Archduke was never allowed to resume his military career, and he remained in retirement until his death in 1847.

Although there are surprising Austrian personal memoirs of the wars, Professor Rothenberg researched widely and to great effect, particularly in the *Kriegsarchiv* in Vienna. He brings today's army of mobile historians to the aid of his subject, and his needs are hardly volumes which show more or less at a glance the location, rather than the detailed contents, of surviving groups of papers. The sources provided by these three volumes is that the approach is a good one: they are informative, well-indexed, clearly set out and (which is not always the case with books

Guides to Sources for British History based on the National Register of Archives

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75pp. 0 11 440121 7

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89pp. 0 11 440144 6

£3.95 each. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, for the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts.

JANET FOSTER and JULIA SHEPPARD

British Archives: A Guide to Archive Resources in the United Kingdom

533pp. Macmillan. £25. 0 333 32999 6

In 1869 Queen Victoria appointed the first Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts after representations that, to quote the Warrant,

there were belonging to many institutions and private families various collections of manuscripts and papers of great public interest . . . and that there would be considerable public advantage in it being generally known where such manuscripts and papers were deposited, and that the contents of those which tended to the elucidation of history, and the illustration of constitutional law, science and literature, should be published.

For ninety years the staff of the Commission strove to bring the promised advantages to the public from rooms in the Public Record Office, and then in 1959 its headquarters moved up Chancery Lane to its present location in Quality Court. In that year a new Warrant considerably enlarged the Commission's terms of reference and recognized the existence, under its wing, of the National Register of Archives which had been opened in 1945 and which is now an indispensable starting-point for almost all filatrical research. Roger Ellis, the Commission's Secretary from 1956 until his death in 1971, has told this story of its first hundred years in his scholarly and witty introduction to the catalogue of its centenary exhibition, entitled *Manuscripts and Men*.

The Commission has by 1983 published 236 volumes of *Reports and Calendars*, covering some 624 privately owned collections of historical papers, which the National Register of Archives houses, and to some extent catalogues, over 25,000 lists and material to be found in an ever-growing number of libraries, archives and private establishments all over the country. The Commission has tried many different methods of making this great store of information available to those unable themselves to visit the original documents envisaged in the 1869 Warrant and adopted in many of the published *Calendars*, and this series of joint publications with local record societies began in 1958 and now amounts to at least 100 volumes. It is a pity that the other, summary lists of collections available at the National Register, published yearly as an appendix to the Commission's annual list of *Accessions to Repositories*, are now almost entirely overlooked by the *Guides to Sources for British History*, and it is an approach which today's army of mobile historians needs are hardly volumes which show more or less at a glance the location, rather than the detailed contents, of surviving groups of papers. The sources provided by these three volumes is that the approach is a good one: they are informative, well-indexed, clearly set out and (which is not always the case with books

emanating from HMSO) remarkably cheap.

Volume 1 of the series, *Papers of British Cabinet Ministers 1782-1900*, records in a summary form the present whereabouts of the papers, political or otherwise, that, at the time of their deaths, remained in the possession of the 229 men who sat in the British Cabinet at any time between the formation of Rockingham's second administration and the Cabinet reshuffle of October 1900. It thus dovetails neatly with Hazlehurst and Woodland's *Guide to the Papers of British Cabinet Ministers 1900-1951*, published by the Royal Historical Society in 1974. 474 separate groups of papers are identified, and it is interesting to note that of these only seventy-five still remain in private hands. However, the point is made that, despite the cries of the alarmists, only twenty-seven major collections have been posthumously sold and very few of these have been exported.

Volume 2, *The Manuscript Papers of British Scientists 1600-1940*, has been in gestation since at least 1966 and publishes the results of an enquiry into the present whereabouts of the papers of 634 British men of science (and one woman, Mary Somerville) - mathematicians, astronomers, physicists, chemists, geologists, botanists, medical men and engineers. Why 635 only? Because this was the number of those who were judged by the members of a joint committee of the Commission and the Royal Society to have fulfilled the criteria necessary to render a person fit for inclusion: that

the individuals concerned should be recognised to have advanced significantly the state of knowledge in their respective fields through their scientific discoveries and inventions. In the case of engineers and technologists their innovations should have involved the application of entirely new principles.

It is obviously less easy to judge whether a man of science fits these criteria than it is to judge whether or not he was a cabinet minister, and there will be those who will quarrel about some of those omitted. Few, however, will quarrel over the usefulness of either of these guides, especially when one's interest happens to be in a figure whose papers now lie scattered like those, for instance, of Sir John F. W. Herschel, the astronomer, whose papers are now to be found in Austin (Texas), Harvard, Oxford, Greenwich, Cape Town, Hermonston, Dublin, St Andrews, Philadelphia, Edinburgh, Kew, three repositories of Cambridge and six in London, as well as in private hands.

Volume 3 of the series takes the 624 collections covered by the Commission's *Reports and Calendars* and provides a guide to their present whereabouts. It gives, in addition, information stored at the National Register on related or connected papers which were not originally covered in the published *Reports or Calendars*. It thus replaces and greatly amplifies the only guide at present available, that forming part of the twenty-fifth *Report of the Commissioners*. It is an extremely useful publication, and one which within its dry entries traces a complicated story of the migration of papers and manuscripts over the last 114 years out of private museums and into predominantly public-funded archive repositories. Chasing these collections was evidently a voyage of discovery for the Commission's staff and Godfrey Davis, its recently retired Secretary, notes in his preface that

It has been encouraging to discover that far less has gone abroad than was previously supposed and that far more has merely moved unmarked into libraries and record offices throughout the country where it has assumed a fresh and perhaps less familiar identity.

It is, of course, during the lifetime of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts that the whole record of St. Wenzel's, John White and Hugo Buchthal can all be wrong in their

Route-maps for researchers

D. G. Vaisey

There are now many hundreds of archive repositories and the Commission in the early 1960s began publishing its list of *Record Repositories in Great Britain* - a slim volume now in its seventh edition. The latest editions of this directory have, however, declined in usefulness, following a decision to exclude from it all those record offices which are solely for the archives of their own parent organizations. This decision not only represented a disservice to those engaged in research but it also nettled, and indeed angered, some archivists.

In these circumstances the news that two archivists, Janet Foster and Julia Sheppard, were compiling a new directory of British archive repositories, and that this directory was to include not only addresses, hours of opening, etc. but also notes on each repository's historical background, major holdings, finding aids, facilities for readers, conditions of access, acquisitions policy and publications, was greeted with delight.

The result was eagerly awaited. Now that *British Archives* has appeared it has to be said that it is a very great disappointment. The opportunity to provide a comprehensive and accurate directory to what seems to many young researchers an irrational jungle has been wasted. It is true that there is much information in this book but its compilation appears to have bordered almost on the haphazard. On the face of it the directory covers 708 repositories, but on examination many of the institutions turn out not to be archive repositories at all, while many active and acquisitive offices or libraries which should be included are just not there. At least the Commission excluded repositories from its list according to some principle (however misguided); in this directory repositories are left out either because they failed to respond to a questionnaire or answer the telephone

or, it seems, by chance. In Oxford, for instance, an area which must possess more archive repositories per square metre than almost anywhere else in the British Isles, one of the three largest - that in the Reference Library in the Westgate where the city's archives are consulted - is not in; Magdalen, Nuffield and St Antony's are the only colleges included, though a glance at Paul Morgan's *Oxford Libraries outside the Bodleian*, or the index of locations at the end of *The Manuscript Papers of British Scientists 1600-1940* (both of which are included in the volume's bibliography) would quickly show how many others should be there. In the region around Oxford it is just as odd: Abingdon's archives are in Woodstock's are not. Elsewhere, for the compilers to omit such establishments as Trinity College, Cambridge, or St Bride's Printing Library on the grounds that "we were unable to obtain a reply" reflects no credit on themselves and does a positive disservice to those whose book is intended to help. The coverage of the archives of noble households is equally peculiar: the compilers state in their introduction that "privately held collections of estate and family records have not been extensively covered, since many of these collections have been listed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission" (an odd enough reason), yet the archives of the Duke of Norfolk at Arundel and those of the Marquess of Salisbury at Hatfield House are included while those of, for instance, the Earl of Harrowby at Sandon are not.

Inconsistency of coverage is not the volume's only drawback. Some entries are positively misleading: that for the Norfolk Record Office, for example, says that it acts as the Diocesan Record Office for two deaneries in Ely Diocese while omitting to mention that it is the

Diocesan Record Office for the Norwich Diocese. The first entry I looked up in the index (Alma Tadema) did not work. Spelling mistakes are legion (what is the "uping room" which is available at the Bodleian Library?), and the standard of bibliographical references is dreadful. The late Neil Ker's name is spelt wrongly again and again (though not consistently so) and his monumental *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries* appears in the entry for *Manuscripts in British Libraries* minus its volume number. Some entries afford amusement: Glasgow School of Art apparently holds "insubstantial archives", while the facilities afforded by Carlisle Cathedral Library amount to "Table. Chairs".

The repositories which are covered are arranged alphabetically by place name: two supplementary lists arrange them in one alphabetical sequence and also alphabetically by county. The collections mentioned are also covered by two indexes: a general alphabetical one and a "Key Subject Word List" designed to provide "a general guide to repositories with holdings of relevance in specific subject areas", but of questionable value.

It would be churlish to deny that *British Archives* contains more information than has any previous directory; yet it is a sad production which with a little more time and a good deal more care and persistence on the part of the compilers, together with a rigorous insistence on accuracy and higher standards by the publishers, could really have worked. As it is, we still need a directory to which we can turn with confidence as a reliable companion round the repositories into which have migrated so many of the papers covered by the Royal Commission's admirable new series of *Guides*.

Appearances of the apostle

C. R. Dodwell

LUBA ELEAN

The Illustration of the Pauline Epistles in French and English Bibles of the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries

180pp. with 331 black-and-white illustrations. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £40. 0 19 817344 X

St Paul is one of the few figures that are immediately recognized in medieval art. Though he was later to acquire his sword, he needed no symbol of identity like the key of St Peter. We know him at once by a particular receding hairline and pointed beard. This conception of his appearance did not derive from the Scriptures, which simply remark that his letters were strong but his body weak. It comes from an apocryphal writing of the second century which formulated the "portrait type" by which he was represented in medieval art.

Not the least pleasing aspect of this book by Luba Elean is its feeling for history, roots and its willingness to begin at the beginning with explanations such as these. It also shows a readiness to face up to controversial problems in a sane and objective way. Foremost among these is certainly that posed by the frescos in the basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome, which are only known to us today from the Barberini drawings of 1634, since the originals were destroyed by fire in 1823. The question is how far these originals were themselves original. An ambiguous reference in the *Liber Pontificalis* may indicate that their origins go back to the mid-fifth century, but they are certainly known to have been "restored" or reworked during the Middle Ages, particularly in the thirteenth century by Cavallini, and this has become a celebrated area of debate. It is not likely that Professors Wietzold, John White and Hugo Buchthal can all be wrong in their

belief that a fifth-century iconography shines through the work of Cavallini, itself seen through seventeenth-century eyes, but the question of the balance between the early Christian and medieval elements remains.

Dr Elean's approach to this problem is a properly cautious one which recognizes all the difficulties. She has something positive to offer and, on the reasonable assumption that many of the scenes relating to St Paul were so worn after eight hundred years that a restorer would have difficulty in deciphering them, she argues that Cavallini's analogies that Cavallini had probably kept to the ancient originals as far as he could but, for obvious reasons, departed from them when they were actually indecipherable.

As in so many areas of culture, the link between the early Christian and the medieval iconography of St Paul was the Carolingian period. This is represented in the damaged mural of San Benedetto, Mallea, and the far more splendid paintings of two "French" Bibles - the Vivian Bible and the Bible of San Paolo fuori le mura. The illustrations of these books seem to have made fairly free use of the sources available to them and, in so doing, provided the future with some choice of examples - as in the ability to portray Paul's conversion in terms that were either acquiescent or ecstatic. It is instructive to see that the artists of Western Christendom, in establishing a new independence for themselves, showed a more bloodthirsty interest in Paul's ultimate death than their opposite numbers in the Church of the East, though they were certainly later Byzantine influences - most particularly in Italy. The Carolingian tradition was never wholly submerged, but Italian Romanesque painters, whether of a church like San Eusebio at Vercelli, or of manuscripts like two cited from Verona - must have had access to a Byzantine cycle of the Acts of the Apostles. Dr Elean's analysis clearly and at length the complex impregnation of the two traditions.

No one who had looked at the numerous small pictures of the life of St Paul, in the initials of twelfth or thirteenth-century manuscripts would pretend that they are visually exciting but Dr Elean nevertheless shows that they have their own social interest - for example in the increasing desire to differentiate between the Jew and the Christian and to emphasize the opposition of the two faiths.

Peter Brieger has shown us earlier that the hostility of the Church to heretics shaped some of the forms of Bible illustration of the twelfth century. Here we can see how, in this and the next century, the Crusades also had their influence. Wars often breed more intolerance away from the battle-lines than near them and, while some spirit of indigence crept in between the Crusading knight and the Muslim, in Western Christendom itself the Crusades sharpened hostility to all enemies of Christianity and not least to the Jews. This is the period when St Paul acquires his sword, for this is the period of theological confrontation. It is a time when St Paul and his Epistles took on a significance which reached outside the field of manuscript illustration covered by this book, as we can see from a quotation from a German chronicler at Minden: "Moreover there was a great longing surpassing in its size all the hangings I have seen which was imprinted with many aphorisms . . . and above all, it was interwoven with the narration of an epistle of Paul . . . and was fashioned for the adornment of the Minister and Choir in the year 1158 . . ."

This study of Pauline iconography does credit to all those concerned: to the author for an important work characterized by careful scholarship; to the Oxford University Press for publishing a book as specialized as this and for providing no less than 331 illustrations; and to Toronto for providing the primary tool for the research itself. I mean the Toronto Corpus of Bible Illustration, which is surely a monument to the intuitive and foresight of the urbane scholars and former Head of the History of Art Department there - Professor Peter Brieger.